STRUGGLING TO SET THE CAMPAIGN AGENDA:

CANDIDATES, THE MEDIA, AND INTEREST GROUPS IN ELECTIONS

A Dissertation

by

KRISTIN LYNN CAMPBELL

Submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies of
Texas A&M University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

December 2004

Major Subject: Political Science

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Approved as to style and content by:

Jon R. Bond (Chair of the Committee)	Patricia Hurley (Member)
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ABSTRACT

Struggling to Set the Campaign Agenda:

Candidates, the Media, and Interest Groups in Elections. (December 2004)

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Democracy is best described as a struggle over competing ideals and values. One of the most important places where this struggle takes place is in the electoral arena. My dissertation examines the struggle between candidates and their respective messages in this arena. Focusing on fourteen Senate races from 1998 and 2000, I examine, in depth, how the struggle over competing ideals takes place (or in some cases, does not take place) and whether some candidates are more successful than others at navigating their message through the political environment to voters. This study examines the impact of candidate skills and resources as well as state characteristics on the strategies candidates employ when emphasizing campaign issues. In addition, my dissertation focuses on the impact interest group advertising has on the candidates' campaign dialogue and analyzes media coverage in Senate races by comparing each candidate's core message to the campaign information transmitted by the media to voters.

The analysis presented here reveals that candidates employ both multi-dimensional and unidimensional strategies. State party competition appears to offer the most plausible explanation for the variation in strategy across the states. Competition, rather than encouraging a multi-dimensional campaign strategy, appears to promote

convergence towards the median voter and a unidimensional strategy. Furthermore, this study suggests that candidates face a number of obstacles in trying to transmit their campaign message to voters. In addition to struggling against their opponent, candidates have to struggle against both interest groups and the media to get their message to the electorate. Just under one-half of the advertisements interest groups ran were successful at interjecting issues into the campaign debate. Furthermore, in over seventy percent of the Senate races included in this study, the media emphasized issues other than what the candidates were focusing on. While this may have the positive benefit of infusing more issues into the debate, it may also blur the lines of accountability—particularly if candidates have no intention of acting on issues emphasized exclusively by the media.

To Kurt, Parker, and My Family
Thanks for your assistance and understanding

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION:

WITHOUT COMPETITION, DO YOU REALLY HAVE A STRONG DEMOCRACY?

Democracy is best described as a struggle over competing ideals and values. It is often envisioned in society as a struggle between the "haves" and the "have-nots," or between various religious and ethnic groups, or between liberals and conservatives. The cleavages that divide a society change over time as cultures evolve and adapt. Regardless of whom the struggle is between or how it changes over time, its existence is important for a democracy to function. Without competing ideals, the public is unable to consider alternatives and make informed decisions. And without choices, what point is there for the public to participate? And without participation by the public, do you really have a strong democracy?

In the United States, this struggle over competing ideals takes place in many different arenas. It can take place on the floor of Congress, between the justices of the Supreme Court, or during a presidential cabinet meeting. One of the most important places this struggle takes place is in the electoral arena. Elections allow the public to participate directly by choosing between competing ideals or values. But while elections provide perhaps the best arena for the public to directly participate in the struggle, the electoral arena is characterized by declining competition.

This dissertation follows the style of the *American Political Science Review*.

Over the last several decades, congressional elections have become less competitive as the incumbency advantage has grown. Between 1980 and 1998, 85% of Senate incumbents and 94% of House incumbents were re-elected (Jacobson 2001). Scholars have offered numerous reasons for this decline in competition. These explanations range from changes in the way district lines are drawn, to the manner in which the media covers candidates' personal lives, and the growth in incumbency resources and obstacles related to raising large sums of money (Jacobson 2001; Herrnson 1997). Few challengers have the ability or willingness to engage in the activities required to raise the enormous sums of money needed to take on an incumbent. Fewer still are willing to undergo the intense media scrutiny required of candidates running for Congress.

So what does this decline in electoral competition mean for the struggle over democracy? It means that one of the main arenas the public has for considering and weighing in on important debates is essentially disappearing. In congressional elections today, few voters are presented with legitimate choices that offer them the opportunity to make meaningful decisions. This decline also suggests that one of the checks on elite power, competition, has all but vanished.

This dissertation examines the struggle between candidates and their respective messages in the electoral arena. Focusing on fourteen Senate races from 1998 and 2000, I examine in depth how the struggle over competing ideals takes place (or in some cases, does not take place). Specifically, I look at whether some candidates are more successful than others at navigating their message through the political environment to

voters. I also address possible reasons for the decline in congressional electoral competition by examining such questions as: Are the congressional candidates running in some states so poorly prepared that they cannot put together an adequate campaign message to compete with the incumbent? And if they do have an adequate message, are the candidates able to successfully navigate this message to voters? Does media coverage serve to enhance electoral competition or stifle it by re-enforcing the incumbency advantage? Do interest groups and their independent expenditures help to infuse new issues and competition into congressional races or are they largely ignored by the candidates and overlooked by the public? Before addressing these questions, however, a brief overview is provided of the voting behavior literature and the importance of campaigns.

Do Campaigns Matter?

Senate campaigns have become multi-million dollar events, with specialty industries related to fundraising, polling, political consulting and advertising developing rapidly over time to support candidates. The 2000 New York Senate race between first lady Hillary Clinton (D) and Rick Lazio (R) witnessed record amounts of money being spent by the candidates. Clinton spent nearly $30 million to win the election, while Lazio spent $40.6 million in one of the most competitive Senate races in the country (Hernandez 2003). The New Jersey Senate election in 2000 between Jon Corzine (D) and Bob Franks (R) also witnessed enormous sums of money exchanging hands as the candidates spent over $69 million dollars combined (Center for Responsive Politics).

Clearly the amount of money being spent in these contests suggests that participants believe campaigns matter.

Yet, scholars have been slow to find evidence to support this. For many years, scholars argued that campaigns had only minimal effects because the vast majority of the public possessed clear preferences for candidates before the campaign even began (Lazarsfeld et al. 1944; Campbell et al. 1960). Only in recent years as studies became more sophisticated (see Shaw 1999), the media became more prevalent, and scholars changed their notions of how campaigns influence vote choice (see Zaller 1992; Johnston 1992 et al.; Lodge et al. 1995) did evidence emerge that campaigns matter. While some scholars still contend that campaigns have only limited effects on vote choice (see Bartels 1992; Markus 1988; Finkel 1993), there is considerable evidence that campaigns can affect voting behavior—sometimes in significant ways (see Alvarez 1998; Johnston et al. 1992; Zaller 1992; Gelman and King 1993; Lodge et al. 1995; Shaw 1999).

Competing theories differ on how exactly campaigns influence voters' decisions. Gelman and King (1993) and Alvarez (1998) contend that the main effect of a campaign is to educate voters about where the candidates stand and solidify the certainty of their decision. Alvarez (1998) demonstrates that presidential campaigns reduce voter uncertainty particularly among less educated and less informed voters who are exposed to the mass media. Peterson (2004) provides evidence based on an experiment involving fictitious Senate candidates to support this perspective. However, his test of the opposing priming theory (see below) promoted by Zaller (1992) and others is poorly

designed. He fails to take into account that candidates in the same race often times stress different issues (Petrocik 1996; Johnston 1992) and that voters have the opportunity to absorb these targeted messages over months, not in the time frame of a day.

Another theory of campaign effects focuses on how campaign information and events lead voters to form impressions of the candidates. Lodge, Steenbergen, and Brau (1995, 309) contend that while over time people forget most of the campaign information they are exposed to, they continually adjust their overall evaluation of the candidates in response to their on going assessment of campaign information. Consequently, campaign messages and events are important in helping voters continually update and modify their evaluation of the candidates.

However, this theory seems to best fit those voters who are least interested in campaigns. Voters who are more interested in politics and in campaigns should be more likely to remember specific campaign issues and events. Dalager (1996) provides some evidence to support this. Based on an analysis of the 1988 U.S. Senate elections, Dalager (1996, 495) finds that 57.7% of survey respondents were able to correctly name an important campaign issue from the Senate race in their state. Although Dalager (1996) takes a pessimistic perspective of this percentage (suggesting that too few voters can correctly identify important campaign issues), his study fails to account for the agenda setting role the media frequently play in campaigns. As chapter V will demonstrate, there are more than a few races where the media emphasizes different issues from the candidates and this is something his study does not take into account. Just et al. (1996, 209) also find that over the course of the 1992 presidential election,

voters repeatedly discussed specific "considerations" related to candidate competence, character, and policy stances rather than simply overall evaluations of the candidates.

Much evidence and conventional wisdom supports the "priming" theory; this is the theory that this dissertation assumes best predicts how issue voters truly behave. Proponents of the "priming" theory believe that campaigns serve to prime voters by determining what considerations (or issues) they base their decision on. Scholars who take this perspective (Iyengar and Kinder 1987; Zaller 1992; Johnston 1992; Petrocik 1996; Funk 1999) suggest that candidates use their campaigns to strategically call attention to certain issues and character traits and this in turn primes voters and influences their vote choice. Since many voters have conflicting ideological beliefs (Converse 1964), it makes intuitive sense that in important races they would: (1) consider the issues each of the candidates is emphasizing because these are the issues the candidates are most likely to act on once in office; (2) consider which of the campaign issues are most important to them personally and then (3); vote for the candidate who is emphasizing the issues the voter cares most about.

The difficulty for candidates is ensuring the media primes the issues they are advantaged on and not issues that are advantageous to their opponent or irrelevant to the campaign. Iyengar and Kinder (1987, 110) use experiments involving local and national news broadcasts to provide some of the most compelling evidence on how the media can "prime" or shape "the priorities that are uppermost in voters' minds as they go to the polls to select a president or a U.S. Representative." This analysis finds that both policy and personal character issues are capable of being primed, and that recent considerations

do indeed influence vote choice. Focusing on four presidential elections between 1984 and 1996, Funk (1999) similarly provides support for the "priming" theory by focusing on character issues. She finds that character traits vary in their effect on candidate evaluations, suggesting that "as candidates and campaigns call attention to different underlying trait dimensions, the bases for overall evaluation vary accordingly" among voters (Funk 1999, 700).

This "priming" or "changing considerations" theory, however, does not predict how all voters make their decision about whom to vote for. Analyzing voting behavior in presidential elections from 1972 to 2000, Abramson et al. (2002, 137) estimate between 26% and 55% of voters were capable of basing their decision on issues. Clearly, the amount of information available about a race and the voter's individual political interest and sophistication level play a part in determining whether they base their decision on issues (Iyengar and Kinder 1987; Zaller 1992; Westlye 1991; Sniderman, Brody, and Tetlock 1990; Bartels 1996; Alvarez 1998). Issue voting is most likely to occur in competitive congressional races, where interest is high and information is plentiful (Westlye 1991). As Zaller (1992, 253) notes, in non-competitive races where "individuals are exposed to one-sided communication flow [from the incumbent], as in low-key House and Senate elections, their capacity for critical resistance appears quite limited." Similarly, Westlye (1991) finds that in Senate races where information is plentiful, voters are more likely to consider issues when making their vote choice, while in races where campaign information is more scarce, voters are likely to rely on partisan cues.

Bartels' (1996) also lends some credibility to the importance of information in influencing voting behavior by examining presidential elections from 1972 to 1992. According to his study, women and Catholics had different vote preferences depending on whether they were informed or uninformed, suggesting that the amount of information an individual has may indeed influence the process used to choose a candidate. Bartels (1996, 220) also finds that controlling for social and demographic characteristics, uninformed voters tend to favor incumbents and Democratic candidates.

Variations in how individuals make their vote choice also exist across individuals depending on their level of political interest and sophistication—although findings are surprisingly mixed as to which groups rely more on issues when voting (see Alvarez 1998; Miller, Wattenberg, and Malanchuk 1986; Sniderman, Brody, and Tetlock 1990). Consequently, issue voting is more likely to be undertaken by certain types of voters and to occur in competitive races with high levels of information. Unfortunately, today only a limited number of congressional races qualify as competitive (Jacobson 2001), giving voters few opportunities to participate directly in the democratic struggle over ideals.

Outline of Dissertation

As discussed previously, this dissertation examines the struggle between candidates (and their competing ideals) in an effort to increase understanding of the possible reasons for the decline in congressional election competition. Specifically, this project looks at how successfully candidates are able to navigate their message through a series of obstacles (i.e. interest groups and the media) to voters, and whether some

candidates are better equipped to do so than others. This study content analyzes thousands of campaign press releases, newspaper articles, and political advertisements from fourteen 1998 and 2000 Senate elections in an effort to understand the strategy behind candidate campaign messages, the impact of interest group advertising on campaign dialogue, and the extent of media coverage of campaign messages.

A brief overview of each of the chapters follows: Chapter II explains the various data sources and methods used in this project. Chapter III examines the impact of candidate skills and resources as well as state characteristics on the strategies candidates employ when emphasizing campaign issues. Chapter IV examines the impact of interest group advertising on the candidates' campaign dialogue. Chapter V analyzes media coverage in Senate races by comparing each candidate's core message to the campaign information transmitted by the media to voters.

If either the candidates are not providing clear campaign messages or the media is failing to adequately cover the candidates' campaign messages, then voters are less likely to vote on issues and participate in the democratic struggle over ideals. As V.O. Key (1966, 7) pointedly states, "the electorate behaves about as rationally and responsibly as we should expect, given the clarity of the alternatives presented to it and the character of the information available to it." Either condition noted above could help to further explain declining levels of congressional election competition and variations in electoral participation.

CHAPTER II

METHODS AND DATA ANALYSIS

This study attempts to answer a number of different questions related to campaigns:

(1) Do candidates attempt to set the campaign agenda, and under what conditions are they successful?

(2) Under what conditions are interest group advertisements effective at influencing the campaign dialogue?

(3) Are candidates able to navigate their messages through the media?

Answering these questions requires data from multiple sources: campaigns, interest groups, and newspapers. What makes this dissertation unique is that the data used in this study are collected directly from the field over the course of two election cycles (1998 and 2000). Since Senate campaigns occur during predictable election cycles, data collection had to be undertaken in a timely fashion. Campaigns and their staff members quickly disappear after the election night festivities (especially if the candidate didn't win) and campaign workers, who are exceedingly difficult to track down after the campaign is over, have little incentive to help once the election has been decided.

Although fieldwork can be difficult, it is not impossible. My dissertation is a testament to this. The data used in this analysis come from three primary sources: twenty-eight Senate campaigns, fourteen newspapers, and the *National Journal* website

(which archives campaign advertisements). Data collection and content analysis will be described separately for each source.

Senate Campaigns

In the spring of 1998 and 2000, Senate candidates running in the upcoming election were contacted and asked to participate in a study that would analyze media coverage of their race. While some candidates (and their staff members) were cooperative and eager to have their race analyzed, other campaigns were rather suspicious and ultimately chose not to participate. The process of gaining cooperation was often tedious and time consuming. Initial phone calls seldom resulted in immediate inclusion in the study. More often I had to make a number of follow-up calls typically spread over a two to three week period to gain cooperation.

However, cooperation was not always guaranteed. On one memorable occasion in 1998, I was actually accused by a staff member of being a spy for an opponent's campaign. After a lengthy telephone conversation in which the staff member and I repeatedly went over my background, credentials, and reasons for undertaking the study, we finally reached an impasse. Needless to say, this campaign is not included in the study. More often, however, I was given a list of excuses and asked to call back at a more convenient time. This sometimes went on for weeks. Staffers on two campaigns (one Democratic and one Republican) actually gave me the "run around" for the entire campaign season, promising information but never actually delivering. Even after the election was over, they managed to avoid participating.

In the end, my persistence paid off and I was able to gain full cooperation from 56 candidates (in 42 races) over the 1998 and 2000 election cycles. Complete information for both the challenger and incumbent (or both challengers in open races) was obtained for fourteen races. The 1998 Senate races with both candidates participating include: California, Arkansas, Ohio, Oregon, New York, Missouri, Illinois, and Arizona. The 2000 Senate races with both candidates participating include: New York, Virginia, Michigan, Florida, Indiana, and New Jersey. These races represent a diverse group: five of the races were open seats (Arkansas, Ohio, New York [2000], Florida, New Jersey); six of the races with incumbents running were moderately to highly competitive (California, New York [1998], Missouri, Illinois, Michigan, Virginia) with incumbents losing the general election in four of these races (New York, Illinois, Michigan, and Virginia); and three of the races were non-competitive, with the incumbent eventually winning by more than 60% of the vote (Arizona, Oregon, Indiana).[1]

Candidates who chose to participate in the study agreed to place me on their press release list, so whenever a press release or campaign statement was sent out via fax to the media, I received a copy as well. With the growing sophistication and accessibility of the internet, some campaigns (particularly in 2000) chose to post press

[1] Races were divided into three categories (highly competitive, moderately competitive, and not competitive) based on poll results reported by National Journal in late September/early October of the election year. Races where there were 10 or fewer percentage points between the candidates are considered to be "highly competitive," while races where there were 20 or more percentage points separating the candidates were considered "not competitive." Races in between (with 11-19 percentage points separating candidates) were considered "moderately competitive."

releases on their website or send press releases via the internet. In a number of races (again particularly in 2000), I was referred to the campaign's website and after being assured it was updated on a daily basis, I was able to gain the press releases electronically. Press releases were collected between July and November of the election year.

Each candidate's campaign advertisements were also collected over the same time period from the *National Journal* website. *National Journal* archives campaign advertisements from presidential, Senate, House and gubernatorial races.[2] Appendix B provides basic information on each of the candidates, including their party, previous experience, election vote total, and the number of press releases their campaign issued.

Each press release and campaign advertisement (after being transcribed) was content analyzed and coded according to the type of policy issues that were discussed (see Appendix A)[3]. Content analysis was undertaken using an extensive issue codebook (based on Baumgartner and Jones 2000) that listed twenty distinct policy areas and numerous subtopics within each policy area (see Appendix A). Only the policy areas (not the subtopics) are analyzed in this study. Examples of the policy areas include health care, crime, education, agriculture, social welfare, macroeconomic issues,

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[2] *National Journal*'s advertising archives are based on campaign advertisements purchased from TMS Media in Washington, D.C. as well as those received from candidates and interest groups. TMS Media is a media monitoring business that uses satellites and technology to monitor the use of advertising on television/radio and sells this information to businesses, political parties, candidates, etc. *National Journal* spokesperson Troy Schneider estimates that *National Journal* has over 90% of all 1998 and 2000 Senate election related advertisements in its archive. Advertisements that may be missing from the archives are those aired on cable stations in specialized media markets (Troy Schneider, Personal Interview 6/29/04).

[3] Content analysis focused specifically on policy issues rather than character trait or campaign issues because previous studies based on survey research (see Dalager 1996) suggest that voters are more concerned with policy issues than character trait issues.

environment, foreign policy, and business/ banking. Policy issues were coded only the first time they were mentioned in the text of a press release or campaign advertisement. A press release, for instance, that discussed the need to reform HMO's and lower the cost of prescription drugs would receive one code for health care. Similarly, a political advertisement that called for teacher testing to raise educational standards and keeping drugs out of schools would be coded once for education

As demonstrated by the subtopics listed in Appendix A, each policy area is distinct. In a few cases, however, issues could have been placed in two or more separate policy areas. For example a discussion of pesticides could potentially fall under agriculture or the environment. In each of these cases, the angle of the issue discussed determined where the issue was placed. For example, an issue that discussed pesticide runoff and the need for stricter regulations was coded as an environmental issue, while a discussion of the effect of pesticide use on agricultural productivity was coded as an agriculture issue. If both pesticide angles were discussed then both the environment and agriculture were credited.

Cases such as the one described above were specifically noted in the codebook so future discussions of the issue would receive exactly the same treatment as a way of ensuring accuracy. To ensure that coding reliability over time was not a problem, thirty press releases were randomly selected and content analyzed at the beginning of the study and then re-analyzed at the end of the project. Ninety-nine percent of the policy area codes matched exactly.

The policy issues discussed by each candidate were then tallied and the candidate's **range** (total number of policy areas discussed) and **central campaign message** (comprised of the three most frequently mentioned issues) were compared across pairs of candidates in the same race. The central campaign message is comprised of the three issues candidates discussed most frequently because survey research (see Dalager 1996) suggests that the vast majority of voters cannot name more than three important issues in a Senate race. Based on the 1988 Senate Election Survey (SES), Dalager (1996, 493) reports that of the 1,485 respondents who claimed to have voted in the 1988 election, 61.3% could name one issue that they believed was frequently discussed in the Senate campaign in their state, 13% were able to mention a second issue, and only 3% could name a third issue.

Appendix D presents the central campaign message (or three issues most frequently mentioned) for each of the candidates in the fourteen Senate races under study. The percent each issue area comprised of the candidate's total dialogue on policy issues illustrates how important the issue area was to the candidate's overall campaign message. Across all of the races, the issues most likely to be discussed were macroeconomic issues (i.e. taxes, budget, government spending), education issues, health issues, and crime issues.

Scholars have attempted to measure campaign messages using other methods, such as campaign advertisements (Kahn and Kenney 1999), surveys of campaign staff (Kahn and Kenney 1999), media reports from newspapers (Petrocik 1996), and campaign summaries in specialty publications such as *Congressional Quarterly, Roll*

Call, Cook Political Report (Dalager 1996). Each of these sources, however, is either biased towards more competitive Senate races (i.e. campaign advertisements) or leaves room for media bias (newspapers) and human error (campaign staff surveys and specialty publications) because data are based on qualitative impressions rather than quantitative measures. In addition, none of the previously mentioned methods allows for detailed analysis of campaign dynamics over time.

Interest Group Advertisements

The *National Journal* website archives interest group advertisements (in addition to candidate advertisements) according to the race the advertisement was aired in. Interest group advertisements collected from *National Journal's* archives are transcribed and coded according to the issues discussed in the same manner as the candidate press releases and advertisements (see Appendix A). Interest groups typically focus their efforts on competitive races where they have a chance of influencing the outcome of the election (Herrnson 1997; Jacobson 1999). Consequently, interest groups did not broadcast advertisements in every one of the fourteen races being examined, but rather focused their efforts on seven races that were highly competitive (NY 1998; CA 1998; NY 2000; VA 2000; NJ 2000; MI 2000; FL 2000). Each of these states offers an excellent case study of interest group influence in elections: if interest groups are able to influence campaign dialogue, it should be visible in states where the candidates feel pressured to respond due to the intensity of the race. Previous research (Jacobson 1999) on the effectiveness of independent advertising by interest groups compares group

involvement in select races to congressional outcomes, without demonstrating *how* interest group advertising influences campaign dynamics and outcomes.

Interest groups were quite active in the seven races under study. Twelve interest groups broadcast 24 television and radio advertisements between July 10 and Election Day (November 3 in 1998 and November 7 in 2000). The majority of the advertisements under study came from the 2000 Senate election cycle, suggesting that interest groups were more active in 2000 than 1998. Of the eight 1998 Senate races examined in this dissertation, interest groups ran political advertisements in only two states (New York and California). Furthermore, in these two Senate races, only two interest groups ran campaign advertisements (the Sierra Club and the National Abortion Rights Action League). In contrast, ten different interest groups ran advertisements in all five of races being examined in 2000. Appendix E lists each of the interest group advertisements by state, citing each of the candidates specifically mentioned in the ad.

The extent of interest group involvement varied across states. In some states only one interest group ran an advertisement (New York 2000; New Jersey 2000), while in other states four or more interest groups ran advertisements (Virginia 2000; Michigan 2000). The interest groups that were most active in the 1998 and 2000 races under study—meaning they ran advertisements in more than one state—were the Sierra Club, Peace Action, Handgun Control, and the National Right to Work Committee. Together, they accounted for fifteen of the twenty-four advertisements examined in this dissertation. The issues most frequently mentioned in the interest group advertisements were: health care, the environment, education, crime, labor, and defense.

To determine if interest groups were effective at influencing the debate between candidates, I examined each candidate's campaign rhetoric the week before and the week after the interest group advertisement initially aired. Interest group campaign advertisements were considered to be effective when a candidate increased his or her rhetoric on an issue in the week immediately following the initial broadcast of the ad. As might be expected, the results presented in Chapter IV reveal that some interest group advertisements are more effective than others. I examine a number of hypotheses in an attempt to understand why this variation in interest group advertisement effectiveness occurs.

News Coverage

To track the candidate's media coverage in each of the fourteen states, newspaper articles were collected using *Lexis-Nexis* and *Newsbank* (both on-line databases) between July and Election Day in November from the newspaper with the largest circulation in each state.[4] All newspaper articles that mentioned either of the candidates' names (or some variation thereof) were content analyzed according to the same policy issue coding scheme that was used for the candidate press releases and campaign advertisements (see Appendix A). Appendix C lists the newspapers, their

[4] The newspaper with the largest circulation is used whenever possible, however the on-line databases *Lexus-Nexus* and *Newsbank* do not provide access to all newspapers in a given state. Furthermore, newspapers that were deemed to have a national constituency (such as the *New York Times* and *Los Angeles Times*) are not used because more state oriented newspapers are expected to provide better and more abundant coverage of elections in that state.

circulation rates, the number of articles mentioning each of the Senate candidates, and the percent of news stories that discussed policy issues.

Newspapers are selected for content analysis rather than local television news for two primary reasons: newspapers tend to offer more extensive election coverage and in terms of practicality, newspapers are much easier and more cost effective to obtain than television coverage. Although empirical evidence is mixed over the medium (newspaper or television news) voters gain most of their electoral information from (Clarke and Fredin 1978; West 1994; Mondak 1995; Brians and Wattenberg 1996), studies do suggest that newspapers carry more information about state-wide elections than local television news (Goldenberg and Traugott 1984; Westlye 1991).

Previous research (Westlye 1991; Kahn 1991) has relied upon newspaper coverage of elections because of the practicality involved in obtaining data and due to the fact that "newspapers present an amount of information that more closely approximates what campaigns are issuing" when compared to local television news (Westlye 1991, 45). Since Chapter V seeks to assess how well a candidate's message is transmitted through the media to the public, newspapers are the best source of data to analyze because they offer the most comprehensive coverage. If a candidate's message fails to be transmitted to voters via newspaper coverage, it is even less likely to be transmitted to voters via local television news because of the time constraints placed on the latter.

In an effort to assess media agenda setting effects and press bias in the fourteen Senate races understudy, candidate messages are compared to news coverage. The three

most frequently cited issues in the newspaper (or the **media's central campaign information**) comprise the "campaign agenda" for each race (i.e. the issues on which attentive voters are basing their decisions). Each **candidate's central campaign message** (three most frequently mentioned issues) was then compared to the **media's central campaign information** (three most frequently cited issues by the newspaper) to examine how well candidates' messages are transmitted. The results of this comparison are presented in Chapter V.

Overall, the media covered a wider range of policy issues than the candidates actually discussed in their press releases and campaign advertisements. On average, candidates discussed issues in 14 of the 20 issue areas coded (see Appendix A), while news coverage typically focused on 18 of the 20 issue areas coded. This discrepancy largely exists because the candidates emphasized different issues in the same race and since news stories focus on both candidates' current issues positions and past actions/issues positions. Evidently voters are being presented with a wide range of information to base their decision on. This discrepancy also suggests, however, that the candidates may have a difficult time focusing the media's coverage of their campaign.

Both media agenda setting effects and press bias were assessed. Races where the media focused only on issues the candidates were emphasizing have no agenda setting by the press, while races where the newspaper focused on one or more issues that neither candidate was emphasizing have agenda setting by the media. The agenda setting effect is considered to be "extensive" if (1) the main issue covered (the one most often discussed in news articles) was emphasized by neither candidate or if (2) two or more of

the three main issues focused on by the news were not part of either candidate's main emphasis. Races where the newspaper covered each candidate's main campaign issues equally are considered to have "no bias" and races where one candidate's main issues were covered more than the opponent's are considered to have "media bias." As might be expected, the results presented in Chapter V once again reveal that there is variation across races in how well the news transmits candidate's messages. I examine a number of hypotheses in Chapter V in an attempt to understand why this variation in media coverage occurs.

Data Analysis

Based on the small number of races being examined, descriptive statistics, graphs, cross tabulations and chi-squared tests are the main form of analysis used to test hypotheses throughout my dissertation. While only fourteen Senate races are examined, each of these case studies offers a detailed, quantitative analysis of the strategic interplay between electoral actors. Agenda setting by candidates, interest groups, and the media in campaigns is a relatively new area of research (Simon and Iyengar 1996) and thus this type of strategic interplay between multiple actors is good to examine (at least initially) through the quantitative case study approach.

While other studies have examined more races (Kahn and Kenney 1999; Dalager 1996), they have been unable to study campaign dynamics in much detail and their measures of candidate issue emphasis are not as accurate. Previous measures of campaign messages are based on campaign advertisements (Kahn and Kenney 1999) and

summary evaluations of the campaign by specialty publications (Dalager 1996) or campaign staff (Kahn and Kenney 1999). As discussed earlier, each of these sources is either biased towards more competitive Senate races (i.e. campaign advertisements) or leaves room for human error (campaign staff surveys and specialty publications) because data are based on qualitative impressions rather than quantitative measures. Quantitative case studies such as this are also beneficial because they allow for the study of campaign dynamics over time. Chapter IV demonstrates this by examining changes in candidate issue emphasis after interest group advertisements are broadcast.

Consequently, this quantitative case based study of fourteen Senate races offers the advantages of detailed analysis over time and measurement accuracy, two benefits not characterized by earlier studies that use more qualitative, summary measures of campaigns. In addition, case studies often provide important insight into new areas of research (Gerring 2004).

CHAPTER III

CANDIDATE STRATEGY AND CAMPAIGN DIALOGUE IN SENATE ELECTIONS

While many scholars have examined the role of district and national partisan forces, incumbent vulnerability, challenger quality, and money in elections, much less scholarly work exists on the role of a candidate's message in an election. Conventional wisdom and political consultants, however, maintain that a candidate's message is a very important element of a campaign that can have significant electoral consequences. Scholarly research on voting behavior provides some indirect evidence to support this contention. In elections from 1972 to 2000, scholars estimate between 26% and 55% of voters were capable of basing their decision on issues (Abramson et al. 2002, 137). Researchers explain this wide variation across elections by noting that voters rely more on issues and ideology (and less on party and incumbency) as the level of campaign information increases (Westlye 1991) and as candidates take more distinct stances on the issues (Abramson et al. 2002). Due to the potentially large number of issue voters that reside within the electorate, candidates act strategically when forming their campaign message. Issues are an integral component of a candidate's message; candidates at all levels of government rely on issues as a means of defining their opponent, distinguishing their ideological positions and persuading voters to support their endeavor.

However, a basic question remains unresolved in the literature: do candidates in the same race campaign on the same issues, relying upon issue positioning and persuasive appeals to win votes, or do they campaign on entirely different issues in an attempt to set the campaign agenda? Spatial theories of elections are based on the premise that candidates in the same race emphasize the same issues, but position themselves differently depending on the competitiveness of the race (Downs 1957; Huntington 1950; Fiorina 1974). More recent theories however, such as Petrocik's (1996) issue ownership theory and Riker's (1996) heresthetical principles, are based upon the premise that candidates in the same race emphasize different issues. Consequently, this question remains to be examined empirically in an electoral context.

This chapter examines the strategies undertaken by twenty-eight candidates in fourteen Senate races held during the 1998 and 2000 election cycles in an attempt to address this controversy and demonstrate the role that resources and skill play in influencing campaign strategy. The basic research questions this chapter attempts to address are: Do candidates campaign on the same issues as their opponent or do they campaign on entirely different issues in an attempt to set the campaign agenda? And under what conditions would we expect the strategies candidates engage in to vary?

Previous Research

Previous research has developed a number of theoretical frameworks for understanding the strategic behavior of politicians (see Huntington 1950; Downs 1957; Fiorina 1974; Goldenberg and Traugott 1984; Riker 1996). Earlier work, such as

Down's convergence theory and Huntington's revised theory, are based upon the premise that candidates in the same race emphasize the same issues but position themselves differently depending on the competitiveness of the race. According Downs' convergence theory, candidates position themselves on electoral issues with the median voter in mind. In an effort to win election, each candidate selects intermediate positions within the distribution of constituent opinion (Downs 1957; Page 1978). Consequently, this theory predicts that candidates in competitive districts will campaign on the same issues and take positions that diverge only slightly from the median voter in an attempt to win majority support. In non-competitive districts, however, candidates' own views (or the views of other interests) may draw candidates' issue positions away from the center—and therefore away from each other (Goldenberg and Traugott 1984).

In contrast to the convergence theory, Huntington (1950) proposes a "revised" theory that suggests candidates in competitive races select divergent positions on the same issues, while candidates in non-competitive races select similar positions on the same issues. Huntington (1950, 660-677) reasoned that competition would lead candidates to "attempt to win elections by mobilizing a high degree of support from a small number of interests rather than by mustering a relatively low degree of support from a large number of interests." According to this theory, candidates in competitive districts will take divergent positions on the same issues because each expects to build a winning coalition based upon different parts of the constituency.

More recent theories, such as Petrocik's issue ownership theory and Riker's heresthetical principles, are based upon the premise that candidates in the same race

emphasize different issues. According to Petrocik's issue ownership theory, candidates emphasize issues on which they are advantaged (and their opponents are less well regarded) in an effort to set the campaign agenda. Consequently, campaigns increase the salience of certain issues and in doing so establish the criteria on which voters base their election-day decisions (Petrocik 1996).

Proponents of the issue ownership theory (Petrocik 1996; Ansolabehere and Iyengar 1994) argue that each of the political parties has a reputation for policy and program interests which leads the electorate to form expectations regarding the relative capabilities of each of the parties to deal with different types of issues. For example, Petrocik (1996) demonstrates that the electorate perceives Democrats as better able to handle social welfare issues, such as social security, health care, education, and poverty. In contrast, the public perceives Republicans as being more capable of handling certain economic issues (such as holding down taxes and controlling inflation), crime, foreign policy and defense issues (Petrocik 1996). The goal for each of the candidates, therefore, is to make the issues owned by their party the center of the election and the criteria by which voters make their choice (Petrocik 1996).

Riker's dominance and dispersion principles also assume that candidates will naturally emphasize different campaign issues. According to Riker's dominance principle, when one candidate dominates in the volume of rhetorical appeals on a particular issue, opposing candidates abandon appeals on that particular issue because they realize their appeal or position has little effect (Riker 1996). Similarly, according to Riker's dispersion principle, when neither candidate dominates in the volume of appeals

on a particular issue, both candidates abandon the issue (Riker 1996). Instead, both candidates seek new and advantageous issues because candidates "do not typically waste their resources fighting out the issues in exactly the same locations." (Riker 1996, 108). In contrast to the issue ownership theory, Riker (1996) does not assume that candidates have a pre-disposition to campaign only on issues that "belong" to the candidate's party.

The literature on the strategic use of campaign issues in congressional races suffers from a number of problems. First, empirical studies conducted thus far have provided mixed support for these various theories (Miller 1964; Fiorina 1974; Goldenberg and Traugott 1984; Erikson and Wright 1997; Petrocik 1996; Ansolabehere, Snyder, and Stewart 2001). Miller (1964, 359), conducting a study of candidate attitudes on the social welfare issue in the 1958 election, found that candidate differences within districts were "heightened when electoral competition is keen and reduced under single party domination of congressional electoral politics." This evidence, based upon average differences in issue positions for pairs of opponents in safe and competitive House races, supports Huntington's revised theory. More recent work by Fiorina (1974) similarly supports Huntington's theory by predicting campaign policy positions based on member voting behavior in Congress. One shortcoming of his study, however, is that he has no measure of campaign issues and positions actually espoused by the candidates during the election.

Evidence also exists to support Downs' convergence theory. Goldenberg and Traugott (1984, 52), in a study of candidate positions on five selected national issues during the 1978 election, found that the mean distance between candidate and opponent

positions was greater in noncompetitive than competitive races for four of the five issues. Thus, in contrast to Miller (1964), their findings tend to support Downs' convergence theory. More recently, a study of candidate positions on 200 issues in the 1996 House race by Ansolabehere, Snyder, and Stewart (2001) resulted in a similar finding, also supporting Downs' theory.

The contradictory findings offered by these studies are perhaps best explained by the second major problem facing this literature: most of the empirical studies that have been conducted thus far analyze candidate positions on issues *selected by the researchers*, not necessarily the issues emphasized by the candidates. This naturally is a problem if each of the candidates chooses to emphasize different issues—issue voters may be comparing the different issues the candidates are each emphasizing, while researchers are comparing candidate positions on the same issues they have selected for their studies. For example, Miller (1964) selected social welfare as the issue on which his analysis would focus, while Goldenberg and Traugott (1984) sought candidate positions on five "national" issues: guaranteeing jobs, aiding minorities, preferential treatment for women and minorities, solving inflation at the expense of a recession, and relations between the United States and the USSR. More recently, Ansolabehere, Snyder, and Stewart (2001) focus their analysis of candidate issue positioning in 1996 by asking House candidates to identify their position on over 200 policy topics. While there is no doubt the survey instrument was extensive, the authors have no real measure of what the candidates were actually emphasizing (or what issues were really salient to voters).

Although these studies are relevant if one conceptualizes the strategies candidates undertake as **unidimensional** (or limited to taking positions on single issues), they largely fail to account for a candidate's ability to employ a **multi-dimensional** strategy where position taking is second to issue selection. Issue selection is perhaps a more important strategy because it allows candidates the potential to structure the terms of debate or set the campaign agenda in a favorable manner. More recent research has begun to analyze the use of multi-dimensional strategies by candidates. Sellers (1998) examines Petrocik's issue ownership theory using data from the 1988 Senate Election Study. He finds that "party ownership appears to exert a strong influence on message selection," suggesting that candidates do indeed employ a multi-dimensional strategy when campaigning (Sellers 1998, 165). Sellers expands on the theory by linking variations in strategies across Democratic candidates and across Republican candidates to the candidate's background (since not all Democrats emphasize the same "Democratic" issues and not all Republicans focus on the same "Republican" issues). He finds that candidates are more likely to focus on issues where either: (1) they have a record and a common interest with their constituents, (2) their opponent has an unclear record, or (3) their opponent has a record and a lack of common interest with constituents (Sellers 1998, 166).

Kahn and Kenney (1999) similarly test Petrocik's (1996) issue ownership theory on Senate elections and find that Democratic and Republican candidates do indeed focus on different policy issues in their campaigns. Based on interviews with campaign managers across three Senate elections (1988, 1990, 1992), the authors find that

Republicans were almost twice as likely to focus on economic issues compared to Democrats (Kahn and Kenney 1999, 54). In contrast, Democrats were almost twice as likely to focus on social programs (such as healthcare, education, and the environment) than Republicans (Kahn and Kenney 1999, 55). Kahn and Kenney (1999, 152) also examine 55 Senate races where they possess campaign message information for both the challenger and incumbent to determine if candidates focusing on similar or different themes influences the amount of media coverage the race receives. While they find that it does not, they fail to explain why candidates in some races emphasize the same issues (or employ a unidimensional strategy) while in other races they stress different messages (or employ a multidimensional strategy). This chapter will address this question.

The third major problem faced by this literature relates to the data sources frequently used to determine candidate messages. Some studies interview candidates and campaign managers after the election is over (Herrnson 1995; Sellers 1998; Kahn and Kenney 1999), while others rely on campaign advertisements (Kahn and Kenney 1999), newspapers (Petrocik 1996; McCombs and Shaw 1972), and reports by political observers/ reporters for specialty magazines (Dalager 1996) to determine candidate issue emphasis. Each of these sources, however, is either biased towards more competitive Senate races (i.e. campaign advertisements) or leaves room for media bias (newspapers) and human error (campaign staff surveys and specialty publications) because data are based on qualitative impressions rather than quantitative measures.

Studies involving post-election interviews and surveys rely heavily upon "after-the-fact" perceptions of candidates and staff members regarding specific strategies

employed and particular issues emphasized during the course of the campaign. For instance, Herrnson's (1995) study is based upon interviews with twenty candidates and campaign managers following the election and questionnaires returned by 334 House candidates and 28 Senate candidates. Kahn and Kenney (1999, 32) interview 147 campaign managers from select 1988, 1990, and 1992 Senate elections, with interviews taking place for some races three years after the election had ended. Due to the limits of human cognition, this naturally focuses a researcher's analysis on those issues and positions mentioned at the end of the campaign rather than issues mentioned earlier in the campaign. In addition, questions related to response accuracy arise when the interviews are delayed over a long period of time.

Studies that are based on campaign advertisements (Kahn and Kenney 1999) also present a problem. These studies naturally focus their analysis on the more competitive races because candidates with limited to moderate budgets cannot afford the expense of campaign advertising. In addition, since most campaign advertising is run towards the end of the campaign, studies that focus exclusively on advertising capture only those issues that are salient at the end of the campaign and that are aimed at the largely inattentive, undecided public. Campaign issues discussed earlier in the election are likely to be different than those stressed at the end of the election because earlier appeals are often aimed at shoring up support among the party faithful while latter appeals are aimed at undecided voters.

Scholars have also attempted to measure campaign messages using campaign summaries in specialty publications such as *Congressional Quarterly, Roll Call, Cook*

Political Report (Dalager 1996). These summaries are typically based on perceptions by academic political observers and staff reporters for specialty publications whose evaluations may be influenced by outside factors such as media coverage or other campaigns (i.e. Gubernatorial, House and state level races) that are running simultaneously, leaving room for human error. The best approach to studying campaigns is clearly to obtain information directly from the campaign and assess multiple sources of information (such as speeches, press releases, campaign advertisements, etc) over the course of the election.

Theoretical Overview: Candidate Issue Emphasis and Campaign Context

Politicians naturally realize that not all issues are equal—a discussion of some issues may be beneficial to their electoral chances while a discussion of others may be detrimental. For instance, George McGovern's failure to place Watergate on the political agenda during the 1972 presidential general election damaged his campaign, while Ronald Reagan's ability to focus the 1980 campaign on the "pocketbook issue cluster"--inflation, taxes, and unemployment--worked to his electoral advantage (Drew 1981). Even in lower level races, such as the Senate, case studies have illustrated the importance of structuring the terms of debate. Based upon observations from twelve Senate campaigns, Fenno (1996, 100-101) notes:

> In a strategic sense, the object of every campaign is to manipulate the agenda confronting the voters. Each side works to define the issues in such a way that the answer will be favorable to its candidate. Each struggles to frame the contest so that voters will face the question each side wants them to face. If you can control the agenda and the question,

> you have the best chance of controlling the dialogue, the answer, and the result.

Consequently, candidates attempt to structure the electoral alternatives for voters in a manner that favors their own campaign (Riker 1996; Fenno 1996; Petrocik 1996). They engage in a struggle to define both themselves and their opponent, with the goal being to set the campaign agenda, or determine the issues that voters base their decisions on. Not all candidates, however, possess the resources or skill necessary to accomplish this. Furthermore, some states are more conducive to agenda setting struggles than others because of the partisan and demographic make-up of the voters who reside in the state.

Four factors are expected to affect the strategies (unidimensional or multidimensional) that candidates undertake: candidate quality, candidate spending, state diversity, and state inter-party competition. Well-funded candidates, high quality candidates, candidates in heterogeneous states, and candidates in states with strong inter-party competition are expected to campaign on different issues from the opponent in an attempt to set the campaign agenda. In contrast, under-funded candidates, low quality candidates, candidates in homogeneous states, and candidates in states with weak inter-party competition are expected to campaign on the same issues as the opponent.

Candidate Skills and Resources. Candidates who possess the monetary resources and experience necessary to wage competitive campaigns have little incentive to emphasize the same issues as their opponent. Not all issues are equal—a discussion of some issues

may be beneficial to their election while a discussion of others may be detrimental—and candidates realize this. Consequently, it is to each candidate's advantage then to emphasize issues on which either they have taken past favorable action or their party has developed a favorable reputation for handling (see Petrocik 1996). Candidates are likely to benefit electorally if they are able to set the campaign agenda and make those issues on which they are advantaged the center of the election and the basis upon which issue voters make their decisions.

Candidates who have few resources and little experience, however, are not expected to be very successful at setting the campaign agenda. A lack of resources and experience not only inhibits a candidate's ability to engage in issue and opposition research, hire professional consultants, and develop a comprehensive campaign strategy, it also limits the media's interest (and the political party's participation) in the race. As a result, candidates who lack experience and resources will most likely be forced to take opposing positions on the opponent's issues in the hope of gaining greater media exposure and public attention. Consequently, I expect the candidates to campaign on the same issues in races where there is a large discrepancy between either the quality of the candidates running or their financial resources.

State Characteristics. State characteristics also affect the issues candidates choose to emphasize. Candidates from homogeneous states are expected to campaign on similar issues because they are attempting to appeal to many of the same groups of voters. In such states, the struggle over the campaign agenda will be muted because campaign

polls clearly outline what issues this homogeneous group of voters care most about. Candidates in heterogeneous states, however, often have completely different bases of electoral support and therefore are expected to emphasize different issues that appeal to these separate bases of political support. Consequently, the struggle to set the campaign agenda is expected to be fiercer in heterogeneous states than in homogenous states.

Similarly, candidates in states with high inter-party competition are expected to focus on different issues in an effort to make the issues "owned" by their party the center of the election. Candidates in states with low inter-party competition (where one party continually dominates the electoral landscape) are expected to focus on the same issues because the voters in that state have a predisposition to favor one party's issues over the other. Consequently, the struggle over the campaign agenda is expected to be fiercer in states with high inter-party competition than those with low because the parties are advantaged on different issues (see Petrocik 1996). Evidence presented by Kahn and Kenney (1999) based on content analysis of campaign advertisements in 97 Senate races supports the importance of competition in explaining candidate strategy. The authors find that candidates are more likely to emphasize policy issues than character trait issues and are more likely to articulate clear stances on policy issues when the race is competitive (Kahn and Kenney 1999, 66).

Data Analysis

The data are based upon fourteen Senate races from the 1998 and 2000 elections where information from both candidates was obtained. The eight Senate races from

1998 include: California, Arkansas, Ohio, Oregon, New York, Missouri, Illinois, and Arizona. Information was collected from six Senate races in 2000: New York, Virginia, Michigan, Florida, Indiana, and New Jersey.[5]

As Appendix C illustrates, most candidates discussed a wide range of policy issues. On average, candidates discussed issues in 14 of the 20 issue areas coded (see Appendix A). The **central campaign themes** (measured by the top three issues each of the candidates emphasized) in the fourteen races examined were similar across the two elections under study. As Figure 3.1 illustrates, the issues most frequently focused on by the candidates were related to health, macroeconomic issues, education, crime, and social welfare, while the issues least discussed were related to labor, housing, energy, transportation, science and technology, and foreign trade. This finding suggests that while some issues are continually discussed during elections, allowing the public to directly participate in the democratic struggle over competing ideals, others issues are habitually ignored, giving constituents little opportunity for public discourse and representation on these issues. This finding also demonstrates why it is important to analyze issues selected by the candidates rather than issues selected by the researchers—candidates do not emphasize or take meaningful stances on all issues.

Examining the range of issues discussed by the different types of candidates (incumbents, high quality challengers, and low quality challengers) reveals an important finding. High quality challengers, or those candidates who had previously held an

[5] Refer to Chapter II for a brief description of each of these races as well as the methods used to collect and content analyze the data.

elected national or statewide office[6], discussed a much wider range of issues (16) than either incumbents (12.6) or low quality challengers (12.7), who had not previously held an elected national or statewide position.[7] This finding suggests that high quality challengers are more capable of speaking on a diverse array of issues and ultimately waging a more competitive campaign than low quality challengers. This is likely due to two factors: (1) candidates with previous political experience have a more extensive background to campaign on and (2) they typically possess the resources necessary to conduct polls highlighting voters' issue preferences and undertake extensive issue and opposition research.

This distinction between the capability of high quality and low quality challengers may also help to explain variations in the amount of media coverage challengers receive (Kahn 1991; Kahn 1993). The media are fascinated with controversy and "new news" (Graber 2002). In an effort to continually garner the media's attention, candidates must frequently shift the focus of their rhetoric over the course of a campaign. This difference in the range of issues discussed by "high quality" challengers and "low quality" challengers (16 v. 12.6) suggests the former are more capable of shifting their rhetoric over time to keep the media's interest. The limited ability to discuss many different issues may be one reason why studies find that "low quality" challengers receive less media coverage (see Kahn 1991; Kahn and Kenney

[6] Hillary Clinton is the one exception to this. As the wife of a sitting president, she has enough of a national reputation to merit being considered a "high quality" candidate even though she has never held elective office on her own.

[7] Based on a difference of means test, high quality candidates discussed a significantly ($p<.00$) larger number of issues (16) than either low quality candidates (12.7) or incumbents (12.6).

1999). This may also help to explain why races with "low quality" challengers are typically not as competitive as races with "high quality" challengers (Jacobson 2001).

Appendix D presents the central campaign themes (or three issues most frequently mentioned) for each of the candidates in the fourteen Senate races under study. The percent each issue area comprised of the candidate's total dialogue on policy issues illustrates how important the issue area was to the candidate's overall campaign message.

Petrocik's (1996) issue ownership theory suggests that candidates should emphasize issues on which their party has a perceived advantage. According to Petrocik, the Republican party is perceived by the public as being better able to handle issues related to crime, protecting moral values, foreign policy, defense, macroeconomic conditions (government spending, inflation, and taxation). In contrast, the Democratic party is perceived by the public as more capable of handling social welfare issues, such as protecting social security, education, improving health care, and helping the poor and elderly. Figure 3.2 illustrates how Petrocik's issue ownership theory applies to this subset of 1998 Senate races.

As is illustrated, a number of the major policy issues emphasized by Republican and Democratic candidates are not "owned" by their respective parties—suggesting that Petrocik's issue ownership theory does not hold up for the Senate elections under study. While Republican candidates were much more likely than Democratic candidates (71% v. 21%) to emphasize macroeconomic issues (an issue "owned" by the Republican party), they were equally likely to emphasize education and social welfare issues, issues

"owned" by the Democratic party according to Petrocik. Seventy-one percent of Republican candidates in the Senate races understudy made education a primary focus of their campaign and fifty-seven percent made social welfare issues a central component of their campaign rhetoric. Similarly, while the majority of Democratic candidates made health (79%) and education issues (79%) the primary focus of their campaign (issues traditionally "owned" by the Democratic party), a sizeable number of Democratic candidates also chose to emphasize crime (43%)—an issue "owned" by the Republican party according to Petrocik. This suggests that either the partisan advantage each of the parties has on certain issues does not really exist, or candidates in each of these two elections chose to "lease" the opposing party's issues for strategic reasons.[8] According to Figure 3.2, Republican candidates in particular appear more willing to campaign on issues Petrocik (1996) contends are "owned" by their opponents than their Democratic counterparts. Further research involving additional races and more detailed content analysis is needed to fully test this theory.

Although Petrocik's issue ownership theory is not supported by this study, the data reveal that there is clearly a pattern of Democratic and Republican candidates emphasizing different issue areas. Republican candidates tended to focus their rhetoric on macroeconomic, education, social welfare, defense, and foreign policy issues, while Democratic candidates made health, education, and crime their central focus. Thus,

[8] This study does not examine sub-issues within each of the twenty different issue areas. Consequently, I cannot determine for certain if the issues are being "leased" or "stolen" by candidates of the opposing party because I have no measure of how the issue is actually being discussed. However, this analysis reveals that Republican and Democratic candidates are not restricted to campaigning simply on issues "owned" by their respective party.

except for the issue area of education, Republican and Democratic candidates chose not to fight out their electoral battle on the same issues. This is more in accordance with Riker's (1996) dominance and dispersion principals, which assume that candidates will naturally emphasize different campaign issues.

In order to test the hypotheses stated above, candidates in each of the fourteen 1998 and 2000 Senate races were paired with their respective opponent and then their campaign messages were compared. The unit of analysis in this study is the race.

Dependent Variable. The dependent variable is the pattern of issue emphasis. This was measured by examining the three policy issues candidates emphasized most frequently. Support for Riker's and Petrocik's multidimensional theories comes from races where the candidates emphasized either one or none of the same policy issue areas. Support for Down's and Huntington's unidimensional theories comes from races where the candidates emphasized two or more of the same issue areas. In seven of the fourteen Senate races (Arizona, Arkansas, California, Florida, Illinois, Missouri, and Virginia) the candidates' major issue areas overlapped only once or not at all (see Appendix D). Thus in half of the races, the candidates' campaign strategies were consistent with the multidimensional theory offered by Petrocik (1996) and Riker (1996)--suggesting candidates do attempt to set the campaign agenda by emphasizing different issues from their opponent. However, in the other seven Senate races (Indiana, Michigan, New Jersey, New York [1998], New York [2000], Ohio, and Oregon), the candidates' major issue areas overlapped more substantially—two or more of the issue areas emphasized

by the candidates were the same. These campaigns are consistent with Huntington's and Down's unidimensional theories. So what can explain this variation in candidate strategy?

Independent variables. The independent variables that will be examined are related to candidate quality, candidate spending, state diversity, and state inter-party competition.

Candidate Quality. Quality candidates in House races are typically characterized by having held a previous elected position (Jacobson 1990, 2001). This is an indirect measure of a challenger's skills and ability to wage a viable campaign. However, in Senate races candidates typically have previous electoral experience. In the fourteen races included in this study, all but five candidates had political experience; nine of the candidates were incumbents and fourteen of the challengers and candidates in open seats held some previous elected position. Consequently, a more fine-tune measure is required to distinguish between those candidates who are likely to have the skills and resources to mount a vigorous campaign and those who do not.

Squire and Smith (1996) recently developed a more fine-tune measure of candidate quality that is well suited to Senate elections. The authors create a "challenger profile index" that essentially incorporates a detailed ranking of elective offices and multiples this by the percentage of the state's electorate covered by that particular

office.[9] The scale ranges from 6 (for a sitting Governor for instance) to 0 for a political novice. In general, candidates that have held an elective national or statewide position have a higher score, reflecting their high level of name recognition and/or previous experience campaigning statewide. Squire and Smith (1996) demonstrate that their measure of challenger quality outperforms both Jacobson's (1989) dichotomous measure and Green and Krasno's (1988) slightly more sophisticated measure in explaining voters' preferences in Senate elections.

Appendix C lists each candidate's "quality score" using Squire and Smith's (1996) methodology. Candidate quality scores were computed for all twenty-eight candidates (incumbents, challengers, and open race candidates) with the net difference between candidates being calculated because the hypothesis calls for pairs of candidates in the same race to be compared. George Allen, the former Governor of Virginia, was the only non-incumbent to receive a perfect score of "six." Four candidates received a "zero" (Corzine, Johnson, Boozman, and Ranger) because they had no previous political experience before running for the Senate.

Challenger spending. Campaign financing also plays a crucial role in a candidate's ability to wage a viable campaign. Regardless of their previous experience, challengers who have substantial financial resources are better equipped for the struggle to set the campaign agenda because they have the funding to hire professional consultants and an

[9] Squire and Smith's (1996) "challenger profile index" scores governors as 6; U.S. Representatives as 5; statewide officeholders as 3; elected local government officeholders as 2; challengers in other political positions as 1; and individuals in no political office as 0.

experienced campaign staff. Ample funding allows the campaign to engage in issue and opposition research, develop a comprehensive campaign strategy, and run extensive political advertisements to gain greater exposure for the candidate and his or her message. Incumbent spending is also an important sign of whether the incumbent perceives the challenger as a real threat. Raising and spending only a small sum of money is a sign that the incumbent is not taking the challenge seriously, while raising and spending large sums of money is a sign that the incumbent perceives a real and viable threat. Typically, incumbents do not spend money unless they have to (Jacobson 2001).

In 1998, the average Senate candidate raised $3,530,000 (Jacobson 2001, 60). This figure is slightly misleading however because it does not take into account the size of the state and the number of constituents each candidate must reach. To take into account variations in state size and to allow for campaign spending comparisons across states, the amount of money spent by each candidate is divided by the population in the state. Appendix C lists the amount of money (in dollars) each candidate spent per constituent. Ed Ranger spent the least amount of money ($.13) per constituent in the 1998 Arizona race against John McCain. Jon Corzine set a historical record by spending the largest amount of money ($7.51) per constituent in the 2000 Senate race against opponent Bob Franks.

Again the hypothesis calls for comparing pairs of candidates in the same race. To accomplish this, the absolute difference in expenditures (per constituent) is computed between the Republican candidate and the Democratic candidate. For example, in the

2000 Virginia Senate race, the challenger, George Allen, outspent the incumbent, Chuck Robb, by $1.86 per constituent. This difference in spending between the candidates is then plotted against the dependent variable in Figure 3.4. Candidates spent relatively equal amounts of money in states such as Florida and California, while spending was much more lopsided in other states such as New Jersey and Virginia.

State Diversity. The state diversity measure is based on an index developed by Sullivan (1973) that has been used in previous studies (Fiorina 1974; Bond 1983). The measure uses demographic characteristics that provide a basis for potential political divisions: age (older than 65; younger than 65), education (college; not college educated), home ownership (homeowners, other), race (African American; Latino; other), and residence (urban, other). The index indicates the "average proportion of unshared characteristics" of two randomly selected individuals (Sullivan 1973, 70), so higher scores signify greater diversity. Morgan and Wilson (1990) updated this index, providing the measure used in this analysis. As illustrated in Table 3.3, the states under study ranged from .395 to .551, with Arkansas being the least diverse and New York being the most diverse. Table 3.3 lists each state's diversity score.

State Inter-party Competition. The state inter-party competition measure estimates the degree of two-party competition in the states. Many scholars rely upon updated measures of the Ranney (1976) index to estimate this (see Jewell and Morehouse 2001). The Ranney index measures each party's electoral strength in the governorship and the legislature, as

well as the amount of time each party controlled these two institutions. Jewell and Morehouse (2001) have computed the Ranney index for each state from 1980-1998. Their updated measure is used in this analysis. States range from having highly competitive state party systems (i.e. Michigan, Illinois, and Florida) to one party dominate systems (Arkansas, Arizona, and Virginia). Table 3.4 ranks the states in order of the competitiveness of their party systems.

Findings

In seven of the fourteen Senate races (Arizona, Arkansas, California, Florida, Illinois, Missouri, and Virginia) the candidates' major issue areas overlapped one or fewer times, while in the other seven Senate races (Indiana, Michigan, New Jersey, New York [1998], New York [2000], Ohio, and Oregon), the candidates' major issue areas overlapped substantially—two or more of the issue areas emphasized by the candidates were the same. So what can explain this variation in candidate strategy? Challenger quality, challenger spending, state diversity, and state inter-party competition are four plausible explanations for the variation that exists in campaign strategies across the states.

According to the first hypothesis, high quality challengers are expected to be more adept at setting the campaign agenda and therefore should have one or fewer major issue areas that overlap. In contrast, low quality challengers are not expected to have the skill or resources to effectively set the campaign agenda, and therefore should be more likely to campaign on the opponent's issues in the hope of attracting greater media

coverage. Consequently, in races where there is a large discrepancy in quality between the two candidates (one high and one low), the candidates are expected to emphasize the same issues. In races where both candidates are of high quality, the candidates are expected to emphasize different issues in an attempt to set the campaign agenda.

As is illustrated in Figure 3.3, although the trend is in the expected direction, the hypothesis is not completely confirmed. In two races with large differences in candidate quality (Arizona and Illinois), the candidates major issue areas overlap only slightly, suggesting that in these races, low quality candidates were no less adept at attempting to set the campaign agenda than high quality candidates. In addition, New Jersey's 2000 Senate race does not fit easily with the hypothesis—even though Representative Bob Franks and millionaire Jon Corzine are relatively evenly matched in terms of candidate quality, both emphasize the same major issue areas (social welfare and education). This is the opposite of what is expected when candidates have similar quality levels. Consequently, the results suggest that some other explanation must account for the candidates' strategic behavior.

In races with two well-financed candidates, both candidates are expected to emphasize different issues in an attempt to set the campaign agenda. In races with large financial discrepancies between the candidates, however, issue emphasis is expected to overlap more substantially because low budget candidates are not able to afford professional consultants or a highly experienced campaign staff needed to conduct political polls, develop a winning strategy, and wage an effective campaign. Consequently, these low financed candidates are more likely to campaign on the same

issues as the opponent in the hope of creating controversy and attracting greater media attention.

Figure 3.4 examines the pattern of issue emphasis and candidate spending[10] in the fourteen Senate races. Based on this figure, campaign spending clearly does not offer an adequate explanation for the variation in the dependent variable. In a number of races with small discrepancies in candidate spending (New York [1998 and 2000], Michigan, and Ohio), both sets of candidates chose to emphasize the same issues even though all were well funded. This suggests that candidates with extensive financial resources do not necessarily use these resources to engage in a struggle over the campaign agenda. This again suggests that some other explanation must exist for the strategic behavior of these politicians.

The state diversity hypothesis calls for candidates from homogeneous states to emphasize the same issues as their opponent because both candidates are attempting to appeal to many of the same groups of voters. Candidates in heterogeneous states, however, are expected to emphasize different issues that appeal to their different bases of political support.

Figure 3.5 compares state diversity with the number of major overlapping issues the candidates emphasized. State diversity also fails to offer a plausible explanation for the variation in issue emphasis across the fourteen Senate races. No clear pattern is evident from the figure, suggesting that candidates in heterogeneous states (such as New

[10] The independent variable again is based on the amount of money each candidate spent per citizen. This takes into account variations in state size. Absolute differences in campaign spending between candidates in the same race were then plotted against the dependent variable.

York) are no more likely to emphasize different issues than candidates in homogeneous states (such as Arkansas).

State party competition offers perhaps the most plausible explanation for the variation in candidate strategies across the states. As Figure 3.6 illustrates, in states where there is traditionally a higher level of inter-party competition (Oregon New Jersey, Ohio, and Michigan), candidates were more likely to concentrate on the same issues. In states where there is traditionally a lower level of inter-party competition (Arkansas, Missouri, Virginia, and Arizona), candidates are more likely focus their campaign messages on different issues. This is contrary to what was hypothesized. Competition, rather than encouraging a multi-dimensional campaign strategy, appears to promote convergence towards the median voter and a unidimensional strategy. In these states, the issues voters care most about are likely to be addressed by both candidates in an attempt to accrue as many votes as possible. This could have important implications for theories of representation—in competitive states where voters are most likely to have information and be attentive, the candidates may actually provide fewer issue alternatives and ultimately less choice than in less competitive races.

Conclusion

The analysis presented here suggests that Petrocik's (1996) issue ownership theory does not apply to the Senate races under study. Republican candidates were most likely to emphasize macroeconomic issues, education issues, and social welfare issues. According to Petrocik (1996), education and social welfare issues are "owned" by the

Democratic party. Similarly, Democratic candidates were most likely to emphasize health, education, and crime related issues. Yet, according to Petrocik (1996), crime is an issue "owned" by the Republican party. Consequently, either Petrocik's theory is not supported or there is a lot of borrowing occurring in the election cycles under study.

In addition, the data from fourteen 1998 and 2000 Senate races suggests that candidates in some races do attempt to set the campaign agenda in an effort to encourage the electorate to vote on issues that favor their election (Riker 1996), but this does not occur in every race by any means. Examining the three issues most frequently discussed by each candidate reveals that candidates campaigned on two or more of the same issues in half (7) of the races studied.

In an effort to explain this variation, four independent variables are examined: challenger quality, challenger spending, state diversity, and state inter-party competition. Of these four possible explanations, candidate quality and state inter-party competition appear to offer the best explanations for why candidates in half of the races studied chose not to attempt to set the campaign agenda, but rather decided to concentrate on the same issue areas.

State inter-party competition offers the most plausible explanation for understanding the strategic behavior of candidates. This study reveals that in states with strong two party competition, candidates were more likely to focus their campaign messages on the same issues, while in states with weak two party competition, candidates tended to concentrate on different issues. This suggests that competition, rather than encouraging a multi-dimensional campaign strategy as hypothesized, appears

to promote convergence towards the median voter and use of a unidimensional campaign strategy. This may have important implications for theories of representation. In competitive states where voters are most likely to have information (thanks to increased media coverage) and a high level of interest, the candidates may actually provide voters with fewer issue alternatives and ultimately less choice than in less competitive races.

CHAPTER IV

CHANGING TACTICS: INTEREST GROUP ADVERTISING IN CAMPAIGNS

In recent elections, interest groups have begun to play more of a direct role in House, Senate, and Presidential campaigns. Through the use of political advertisements they attempt to influence the issues candidates emphasize, the basis on which informed voters make their decisions, and the eventual outcome of the election. This relatively recent development (see Jacobson 1999) may make it more difficult for candidates to set the campaign agenda by emphasizing only those issues that are beneficial to their campaign. Interest group advertisements are exceedingly dangerous to ignore (see Jacobson 1999)--forcing candidates to address issues they would otherwise choose to avoid.

Since the mid-1990's the number of interest groups running campaign advertisements has increased steadily (Rozell and Wilcox 1999), suggesting that many groups view this direct mass involvement in campaigns as beneficial to their policy goals. Initial studies suggest that interest group advertisements can have a significant effect on vote margins, particularly for first term incumbents (Jacobson 1999). This chapter attempts to shed some light on this finding by examining how interest group advertisements can influence campaign dialogue between candidates.

Interest Group Participation in Campaigns

Traditionally interest groups have sought to influence electoral outcomes by contributing money to like-minded candidates and political parties through political action committees (PACs) and publishing voter guides that rate an incumbent's record. In recent elections, however, a small number of interest groups have begun to run issue-oriented campaign advertisements in an attempt to gain widespread attention for their issue and influence the basis upon which informed voters make their election-day decisions. One of the first examples of this occurred in 1980, when the National Conservative Political Action Committee (NCPAC) targeted six Democratic House incumbents and six Democratic Senate incumbents for defeat and spent more than $1 million in advertising (Rozell and Wilcox 1999). While other groups quickly followed suit, it wasn't until the mid-1990's that the number of interest groups directly involved in political advertising increased substantially (Rozell and Wilcox 1999). Following a series of favorable circuit court decisions beginning in 1995, interest groups were suddenly able to advertise in ways "that were clearly designed to support or attack specific candidates but that avoided using the 'magic words' that constitute express advocacy" (Rozell and Wilcox 1999, 139).

This re-interpretation and loosening of the rules quickly led to greater interest group involvement. In 1996, the AFL-CIO became directly involved in a number of congressional campaigns by airing political advertisements (Herrnson 1997; Rozell and Wilcox 1999). The group reportedly spent $25 million to broadcast 27,000 television commercials in 44 House districts (Rozell and Wilcox 1999). This trend of increasing

group involvement continued in 1998 when the Sierra Club and other single-issue interest groups such as the National Abortion Rights Action League (NARAL) ran campaign advertisements in a number of key congressional races. In 2000, groups such as Planned Parenthood, the Sierra Club, Handgun Control, and various labor unions spent around $10 million to influence the outcome of the presidential election (West 2001).

Groups such as these seek to both raise awareness of their issue and influence elections in a more direct and widespread manner than previously has been the case. Why the change? The more traditional method of influencing elections was based on two lines of reasoning: (1) once a group helps a candidate get elected to office, the group will then be granted access to the representative, thereby allowing their issues to be heard and supported (2) if a group can help an ideologically like-minded candidate be elected, the group's issues and positions will automatically be represented in Congress.

Yet, previous studies demonstrate that this type of electoral connection between interest groups and representatives is not always apparent in congressional floor voting. Of the thirty-three major studies that have been conducted on interest group influence in elections[11], the majority have found marginal or no direct connection between PAC contributions and representative voting behavior in Congress (Baumgartner and Leech 1998). Baumgartner and Leech (1998, 134) report that six of the thirty-three studies concluded PACs make no difference (Chappell 1981; Wright 1985, 1990; Grenzke 1989;

[11] See Baumgartner and Leech (1998) for an excellent review of the major studies on PAC contributions and representative behavior.

Vesenka 1989; Rothenberg 1992), fourteen concluded PACs have a marginal influence (see for instance Chappell 1982; Durden et al. 1991; Evans 1986; Feldstein and Melnick 1984; L. Johnson 1985; Kau et al. 1982; Kau and Rubin 1982; McArthur and Marks 1988; Peltzman 1984; Wayman 1985; Welch 1982; Wilhite 1988), and thirteen found that PACs were "highly" influential (Coughlin 1985; Fleisher 1993; Frendreis and Waterman 1985; Jones and Keiser 1987; Langbein 1993; Langbein and Lotwis 1990; Quinn and Shapiro 1991; Saltzman 1987; Schroedel 1986; Silberman and Durden 1976; Stratman 1991; Wilhite and Thielman 1987). Baumgartner and Leech (1998) suggest that these contradictory findings can be explained by differences across studies in the policy areas, votes, and groups examined.

Regardless, these findings hardly suggest that PAC campaign contributions guarantee interest groups influence when it comes to congressional floor votes. While some more recent research finds that representatives are responsive to interest groups at other points in the legislative process (such as at the committee level) because there is considerably less visibility and public scrutiny, this remains to be demonstrated on a wide scale policy basis (Hall and Wayman 1990; Hall 1996). Consequently, many interest groups who contribute money to political candidates may in actuality be getting very little bang (or influence) for their buck. This may explain why interest groups such as the AFL-CIO, Sierra Club, and NARAL have come to believe that they actually have more to gain by being directly involved in elections and campaign dialogue. Recent research by Jacobson (1999) supports this. He demonstrates that Republicans targeted by AFL-CIO advertisements in the 1996 House elections were more likely to vote in

favor of raising the minimum wage than House members not targeted by the interest group. This suggests that independent advertisements (or the threat of them) can actually change members' policy behavior by forcing incumbents facing re-election to engage in "defensive" voting (Jacobson 1999).

New Tactics: Interest Group Advertising in Campaigns. Direct methods of electoral involvement (such as running political advertisements and sending out campaign literature) offer interest groups a number of advantages over the traditional method of contributing money. First, such direct forms of electoral involvement allow interest groups to directly influence attentive voter's decision-making processes. Voters who align themselves with the interest group or are concerned about the interest group's issues are likely to base their decision for a particular candidate on information they gain from campaign literature or political advertisements broadcast by an interest group. Some anecdotal evidence exists to support this. Of the six Senators NCPAC targeted for defeat in 1980, four actually lost, leading the interest group to claim it had effectively influenced voters' election-day decisions (Rozell and Wilcox1999). Recent findings on voting behavior also suggest that as information on a campaign becomes more prevalent, voters rely less on partisanship and more on the current issues of the campaign in making their electoral decisions. Based on a study of Senate elections, Westlye (1991, 11) concludes that as the "level of information (which is a function of the intensity of a given campaign) increases, the influence of party and incumbency decreases, while that of ideology, issues, and other campaign factors increases."

Second, by running campaign advertisements interest groups are able to "prime" their issue not only in voter's minds, but also in the candidates' minds. Whereas candidates traditionally had the luxury of ignoring interest group voter guides because of their targeted distribution and limited effect, they now may be forced to address interest group campaign advertisements. Political advertisements typically reach a much wider audience and they are designed to evoke emotional responses through visual images and sound effects. As a result, even though candidates want to discuss only those issues that are advantageous to their election (Simon and Iyengar 1996), they may feel obligated to address the issues discussed in an interest group's political advertisement--particularly if the advertisement is negative. In such instances, candidates may lose control over their campaign message.

The ability to entice either one or both of the candidates to discuss an interest group's issue can have dramatic results. An issue that at one point in time has only a limited group of supporters can suddenly be thrust into national prominence by being incorporated into a candidate's campaign agenda or highlighted by the regional and/or national media after the advertisement is run. A prominent scholar of agenda setting contends that elections are one of the most important factors behind issues being pushed onto the national agenda (Kingdon 1984). Politicians often make campaign promises during elections and once in office they frequently act upon these promises in order to maintain their coalition of support for the next election cycle (Kingdon 1984).

Thus, interest groups have much to gain by being directly involved in elections, particularly if they can entice either one or both of the candidates to discuss their issue.

By running campaign advertisements they not only have the ability to directly affect election outcomes by influencing the basis upon which voters make their decisions, but they also have the ability to increase the salience of their issue and possibly push it onto the national agenda.

Previous Research

Because widespread interest group advertising in campaigns is a relatively new tactic, few studies examine the effectiveness of these advertisements. The limited research that has been done on this topic is largely anecdotal (Rozell and Wilcox 1999) or focused on the effectiveness of a single interest group (Jacobson 1999). Jacobson (1999), in the only study thus far that empirically examines the effect of interest group advertisements on election outcomes, finds that the 1996 AFL-CIO advertisements specifically targeted weak, first-term House Republicans and reduced their vote in the general election by 4 percentage points (compared to those freshman who were not targeted).

Research in this area focuses instead on the connection between PAC contributions and the activities of candidates once in office. Studies of interest group influence on roll call voting are mixed, with the majority demonstrating that PAC contributions have only a weak or limited influence on representatives' behavior once in office (Chappell 1981; 1982; Wright 1985, 1990; Wilhite and Theilmann 1987; Grenzke 1989; Rothenberg 1992). A number of studies do suggest, however, that PAC contributions can buy access to legislators (Langbein 1986; Wright 1990). Yet, access is

no guarantee of action. More recently scholars have suggested that PAC contributions influence member involvement at the committee level (Hall and Wayman 1990). These findings however need to be evaluated on a more widespread basis (beyond three congressional committees).

In contrast to previous studies that examine the more traditional electoral connection between interest groups and legislators or that focus on the effectiveness of a single interest group's campaign advertisements, this study examines the influence of multiple interest group advertisements directly on campaign dialogue across two election cycles.

Hypotheses

In recent elections, interest groups have begun to play a role in setting the campaign agenda. Using campaign advertisements they attempt to influence both the issues candidates emphasize and the basis upon which informed voters make their decisions. This recent development makes it more difficult for candidates to emphasize only those issues that are beneficial to their campaign and steer opponents, media coverage, and public opinion away from issues that are detrimental to their election.

In response to an interest group's political advertisement, candidates may follow one of three strategies: (1) if the ad is disadvantageous and non-threatening, candidates can ignore the campaign advertisement and continue to emphasize the issues on which they possess an advantage (2) if it is disadvantageous and threatening, candidates may respond to the political advertisement, but try to re-focus attention to a more

advantageous sub-issue (i.e. gun control regulations vs. stricter criminal penalties) (3) if the ad is advantageous, candidates may respond to the political advertisement, so as to reinforce the point. For the analysis in this chapter, strategy 2 and 3 will be grouped together because in each case the candidate does in fact respond to the interest group advertisement.

So when are candidates most likely to respond to interest group advertisements? I expect candidates to respond when they perceive interest group ads to be influential and threatening—that is when the ads are negative, broadcast over the television, aired towards the end of the election, and focus on one of the candidate's main issues. Negative attack advertisements are more threatening to a candidate than positive advertisements because the candidate's character, record in office or current issue position is being criticized. Studies have shown that voters remember negative information about candidates more easily than positive information (Lang 1991; Jamieson 1992; Kern 1989). This effect would likely be stronger if the negative advertisement goes unanswered by the candidate. Thus, while many voters are turned off by negative campaign advertisements, scholars, candidates, and campaign consultants believe they are quite influential (Lau 1985; Kern 1989; Johnson-Cartee and Copeland 1991). Consequently, candidates are expected to respond quickly to negative attack ads.

Candidates should also be more responsive to television advertisements than radio advertisements because television reaches a much broader audience than radio does (Graber 2002). A survey conducted in 2000 found that 75 percent of the public

reported watching television news, while only 46 percent reported tuning into radio news (Graber 2002). Since many candidates and interest groups target their campaign advertisements to the news hour, television advertisements clearly reach more voters. Furthermore, many candidates perceive television as a more threatening medium than radio because of "its ability to reach millions of people simultaneously with the same images (Graber 2002, 197). Consequently, because of its mass appeal, candidates realize that television advertisements have the potential to be more influential and more threatening than radio advertisements.

In addition, because ads are likely to be more influential and threatening as the election nears, candidates are expected to respond to campaign advertisements aired in October more often than advertisements aired in the preceding months (July, August, and September). Ads run near the election are more threatening because this is when large numbers of voters are actually paying attention to candidates and campaigns. Studies have shown that ads are most influential among undecided voters (West 2001), who typically pay closer attention to politics as an election nears. In October, the airwaves are often filled with candidate advertisements aimed at last minute voters who are still undecided. Under such circumstances, candidates cannot afford to let interest group advertisements aired in October go unanswered.

Candidates are also more likely to respond to an interest group advertisement when it addresses one of a candidate's main campaign issues. Candidates who are favorably portrayed in the advertisement will want to reinforce the interest group's point to add to their credibility. Candidates who are attacked will feel particularly threatened

because the interest group is questioning the candidate's truthfulness and credibility—very important qualities to many voters. Candidates whose main issues are attacked by an advertisement feel that they must set the record straight because of the issue's prominence in the campaign and therefore will respond. This is expected to happen more often than candidates responding to positive interest group advertisements.

Research Design

The data for this chapter are based upon content analysis of campaign press releases and political advertisements from seven 1998 and 2000 Senate elections where interest groups ran campaign advertisements (NY 1998; CA 1998; NY 2000; VA 2000; NJ 2000; MI 2000; FL 2000). Interest groups mainly focus their efforts on competitive races where they have a chance of influencing the outcome of the election (Herrnson 1997). Consequently, all of the races examined in this chapter were moderately to highly competitive elections. Each of these states offers an excellent case study of interest group influence in elections because if interest groups are able to influence campaign dialogue, it should be visible in states where the candidates feel pressured to respond due to the intensity of the race.

Interest groups were quite active running campaign advertisements in all seven races. Twelve interest groups ran 24 television and radio advertisements between July 10 and Election Day (November 3 in 1998 and November 7 in 2000). In general, interest groups appear to have been more active in the 2000 Senate elections than in the 1998 Senate elections, leading the majority of the advertisements under study to come

from the 2000 Senate election cycle. Of the eight 1998 Senate races examined in this dissertation, interest groups ran political advertisements in only two states (New York and California). Furthermore, in these two Senate races, only two interest groups ran campaign advertisements (the Sierra Club and the National Abortion Rights Action League). In contrast, ten different interest groups ran advertisements in all five of races being examined in 2000 (see Appendix E).

Appendix E lists the interest group advertisements by state. The extent of interest group involvement varied across states. In some states only one interest group ran an advertisement (New York 2000; New Jersey 2000), while in other states four or more interest groups ran advertisements (Virginia 2000; Michigan 2000). The interest groups that were most active in the 1998 and 2000 races under study—meaning they ran advertisements in more than one state—were the Sierra Club, Peace Action, Handgun Control, and the National Right to Work Committee. Together, they accounted for fifteen of the twenty-four advertisements examined in this chapter.

Of the twenty-four 1998 and 2000 interest group campaign advertisements under study, three-fourths were television advertisements, with radio advertisements comprising one-fourth. Most of the campaign advertisements were purely negative (58%), although groups did run "comparative" ads with both positive and negative components (20.8%) as well as purely positive ads (20.8%). Surprisingly the interest group advertisements were staggered over time—contrary to conventional wisdom, most advertisements did not run in October when the majority of voters are paying attention to elections. Rather, the advertisements were evenly dispersed, with 3 advertisements first

running in July and August (12.5%), 12 first running in September (50%) and 9 first running in October (37.5%).

Interest group advertisements were content analyzed according to the issues discussed (see Appendix A). The issues most frequently mentioned in the advertisements were: health care (32.3%), the environment (23.5%), education (8.8%), crime (8.8%), labor (8.8%), and defense (8.8%). Comparisons were then made between candidate dialogue and interest group advertisements.

Dependent Variable. To measure interest group influence, I tallied the number of times a candidate discussed an issue one week before and one week after the initial airing of the political advertisement.[12] Each candidate's campaign rhetoric was measured by content analyzing the candidate's press releases and campaign advertisements (see chapter II for a discussion of the methodology).[13] Interest group campaign advertisements were considered to be effective when a candidate increased his or her rhetoric on an issue in the week immediately following the initial broadcast of the ad.[14] More specifically, an interest group advertisement was considered influential when either one of two things occurred: (1) a candidate went from

[12] Data are based on the initial date an interest group began airing a political advertisement rather than the number of times and multiple dates an interest group advertisement ran in various media markets. Candidates have the ability to create response advertisements in under 24 hours (or send out press releases in even less time). Consequently, if a candidate is going to respond to an interest group advertisement, this response is expected to come immediately after the advertisement first begins running; candidates have nothing to gain by waiting three weeks to respond to an interest group advertisement.

[13] Each candidate's rhetoric is measured by tallying the number of times an issue is discussed in the candidate's press releases and campaign advertisements.

[14] One week is used as the response time because candidates have the ability to respond in less than 24 hours and this time frame limits the impact of other confounding factors that are not measured (such as pressure from expanding media coverage of the interest group advertisement). In addition, the one-week time frame ensures there is little overlap in races with multiple interest groups running advertisements on the same issues.

saying nothing about an issue two weeks before the ad initially aired to speaking once about the issue in the week after the interest group advertisement aired; (2) a candidate increased his or her discussion of an issue by a net gain of two in the week following the interest group advertisement.

For example, on September 1, 1998 the Sierra Club began running a radio advertisement attacking New York Senator Alfonse D'Amato for failing to support Hudson river clean up efforts and stricter enforcement of clean air and water laws. While Senator D'Amato chose to say nothing about his environmental record in the two weeks before the interest group advertisement began being broadcast, he quickly responded by discussing the environment once in the week following the advertisement (specifically emphasizing his support of legislation to combat acid rain). This is a clear example of an interest group influencing the candidate's campaign message.

Similarly, on July 13, 2000, Handgun Control, a group favoring stricter gun control legislation, began running a television advertisement attacking former Governor George Allen (R) of Virginia for signing a concealed handgun law and vetoing a law to keep handguns out of teen centers in Fairfax County. While George Allen discussed issues related to crime twice in the two weeks before the advertisement began airing, he stepped up his rhetoric in the week immediately following the advertisement, discussing the need for harsher criminal penalties for offenders and greater funding for law enforcement on four different occasions. This is an example of a candidate's rhetoric increasing by a net gain of two following the interest group advertisement. This again is another clear instance of an interest group influencing campaign dialogue.

Findings

So how successful are these groups at influencing candidate strategy and campaign dialogue? Out of the 24 interest group advertisements in the seven races under study, at least one of the candidates the advertisement was aimed at responded in 9 instances (37.5% of the time). This suggests that interest group advertisements are often not successful at influencing a candidate's campaign agenda.

However, this figure underestimates how influential these interest group advertisements really are. Because the majority of these advertisements are negative, candidates who are attacked by interest group advertisements may choose to ignore the attack and instead place even more emphasis on issues that are more favorable to their candidacy. Opponents who are indirectly aided by the interest group attack, however, may actually be more likely to respond. They can re-enforce the point by incorporating the interest group's attack into their campaign message. Consequently, to be accurate, the dependent variable must really capture both candidates' responses, not just the one the advertisement is aimed at. Once the response of both candidates is taken into account, interest group advertisements appear much more influential. Of the twenty-four advertisements that were run, at least one candidates responded to nearly half of the ads (45.8%). In six instances (25% of the advertisements), the interest group advertisement evoked a very strong response, with both candidates responding to the ad.

So what influences candidate responses to campaign advertisements? Does the type of ad (negative, mixed, or positive) matter? The medium used? Does the timing of the advertisement matter? Do the type of issues discussed by the advertisement matter?

Table 4.1 and 4.2 examine the relationship between the type of interest group advertisement (negative, positive, or mixed) and candidates' responses. Table 4.1 uses individual candidates as the unit of analyses, specifically examining candidates' reactions in the 29 instances where the interest group advertisement discussed a particular candidate's record in office or current stance on an issue.[15] Table 4.2 uses the race as the unit of analysis to capture a response from either major party candidate, regardless of which candidate was specifically mentioned in the interest group advertisement. This analysis demonstrates that candidates are much more likely to respond when an interest group advertisement is negative. This is true for both the target of the negative ad (see Table 4.1) as well as the opponent (see Table 4.2).

If the ad is positive, however, candidates rarely respond. According to Table 4.1, candidates respond about one-third of the time (31%) when they are attacked by an interest group advertisement and only 3% of the time when the advertisement promotes their candidacy. And as the analysis in Table 4.2 shows, candidates in general (regardless of who the ad is specifically aimed at) are much more likely to respond to negative advertisements than positive advertisements. The chi-square results presented in both tables are significant ($p<.05$). These findings support my first hypothesis—while

[15] While twenty-four advertisements were run in the seven elections under study, five of these were "contrast" advertisements, discussing both major party candidates in the race.

candidates have the option of re-emphasizing points made in positive interest group advertisements, they are much more likely to respond when they feel threatened and negative interest group advertisements are perceived as threatening.

Table 4.3 examines whether the type of medium (television v. radio) makes a difference in terms of how influential an interest group advertisement is. Contrary to my hypothesis, candidates were not significantly more likely to respond to television advertisements than to radio advertisements. Of the eighteen television advertisements interest groups ran in these select Senate races, candidates responded to eight (44.4%). Similarly, of the six radio advertisements interest groups ran, candidates responded to three (50%). Because radio ads are a cheaper and more focused medium, it is less costly to respond to radio. Moreover, radio advertisements are aired on stations that target attentive issue voters. Consequently, they may be just as threatening as television advertisements aimed at the inattentive mass public.

The month an interest group advertisement initially aired also seems to make a difference in determining how influential the advertisement will be. The relationship, however, is exactly the opposite of what I hypothesized. As Table 4.4 and Table 4.5 demonstrate, interest group advertisements are significantly more likely to elicit a response when they are aired in July, August, or September. Table 4.4 illustrates how very few candidates responded to interest group advertisements in October when they were the target (6.9%), compared to the months of July, August, and September (27.6%). A similar pattern holds when both candidates' responses are taken into account, regardless of which candidate the advertisement was aimed at (see Table 4.5).

Why are candidates less likely to respond to interest group advertisements when voters are most attentive? Perhaps the answer to this question lies with the type of interest group advertisement (negative, positive, and mixed) being aired in October compared to earlier months in the election. If most negative interest group advertisements are aired earlier in the electoral process (say for instance, September), then candidates are going to feel more threatened in September (and consequently be more responsive) than in October. Figure 4.1 illustrates that more negative advertisements were indeed aired in September than any other month, which might help to explain why candidates in these races were less responsive to advertisements in October.

Yet, October did have a relatively large number of "mixed" interest group advertisements with both a negative and positive component. This suggests one of two things: either candidates do not feel as threatened by "mixed" interest group advertisements as they do by purely negative campaign advertisements or candidates are trying very hard in October to stay focused on their main campaign issues because they know voters are most attentive. Candidates may not be as easily distracted by interest group advertisements in October because they realize early advertisements have more potential to define their candidacy and campaign dialogue. Regardless of the reason, evidence from the twenty-four interest group advertisements examined here suggests that groups are most effective when they run their advertisements earlier in the electoral process rather than later.

The last hypothesis I examined has to do with the actual issues discussed in the interest group advertisement. I hypothesize that interest group advertisements discussing one of a candidates' major issues are more likely to receive a response than advertisements that discuss minor or extraneous issues. Appendix D lists each of the candidate's major (or most emphasized) issues based upon content analysis of their press releases and campaign advertisements. Table 4.6 examines candidate responsiveness to interest group advertisements when one or more of a candidate's main issues are discussed. The results demonstrate that candidates are slightly (but not significantly) more likely to respond to interest group advertisements when the ad discusses one of their major issues.

This relationship is more apparent when only negative advertisements are examined. Table 4.7 demonstrates that candidates are more likely to respond to interest group advertisements when they are negative and focus on a candidate's main issue. Candidates responded 31.6% of the time when one of their main issues was attacked in an interest group advertisement and only 15.8% of the time when the interest group discussed a minor or extraneous issue. Similarly, candidates were much less likely to respond to a negative interest group advertisement when it failed to discuss one of their major issues. These results only approach conventional levels of significance ($p<.11$), though given the small sample they are suggestive.

The findings presented here suggest that interest groups can be effective at influencing campaign dialogue. The potential to affect the campaign helps to understand why many groups have chosen to become directly involved in recent elections. Running

issue oriented advertisements not only provides interest groups with the ability to influence the basis on which informed voters evaluate the candidates, but it also gives them the opportunity to influence candidate behavior and campaign dialogue. The results of this study suggest that some interest group advertisements are more influential than others. Groups that run negative advertisements early in the campaign (before October) have a greater likelihood of having their issues incorporated into the candidate's rhetoric. The medium used to broadcast the advertisement and the actual issues discussed appear to be of lesser importance.

Campaign Dynamics and Interest Group Ads: The 1998 New York Senate Election

The analysis thus far has focused on the *immediate* impact that interest group advertisements have on candidate issue emphasis. I examine candidate activity in the week immediately following the political advertisement to determine if the ad had an effect on campaign dialogue. Clearly interest group advertisements can have a much larger, long-term impact over the course of the election. An interest group advertisement needs only to influence one candidate to potentially propel an issue to the top of both candidates' issue agendas.

Candidates are constantly monitoring their opponent's activities as well as the media and any interest groups involved in the race—a change in the opponent's campaign rhetoric or an increase in media coverage following an interest group advertisement can lead to subsequent changes in the candidate's issue emphasis and campaign rhetoric. Candidates in some instances may feel forced to respond to their

opponent's criticism and end up addressing issues they would otherwise choose to avoid. This in turn may spur their opponent to discuss the issue further, possibly leading to a positive feedback cycle. All of this subsequent activity is likely to be missed by my earlier analysis because of the limited time frame in which I look for an effect. Consequently, interest group advertisements may be even more effective than what the analysis suggests.

Furthermore, my analysis of changes in candidate rhetoric after an advertisement is initially aired does not fully capture the dynamic nature of candidate responses. Even candidates who are forced to discuss an issue because of an interest group advertisement can choose what angle of the issue they emphasize. For example, just because the Sierra Club focuses their advertisement on clean water laws doesn't mean the candidate (if he or she responds) will address the same aspect of the environment. Rather, the candidate may decide to talk about his or her environmental record as it pertains to waste management or endangered species protection. Candidates who are attacked by interest group ads have the ability to frame the issue in a more favorable light. Consequently, while my previous analysis demonstrates that some interest groups are successful at getting candidates to discuss certain issues, there is no guarantee that the candidate will discuss the same aspect or "sub-issue" the interest group focuses on in their advertisement.

The 1998 New York senate race offers an excellent case study for better understanding the dynamic nature of interest group advertisements and candidate behavior. The 1998 New York senate race pitted a three term Republican incumbent,

Alfonse D'Amato against an experienced Democratic challenger, Charles Schumer, who at the time was serving in the House of Representatives. It was a very competitive and very negative race, with the finish too close to call right up until election-day.

One of the interest groups heavily involved in the race was the National Abortion Rights Action League (NARAL). NARAL ran three campaign advertisements in New York, one sixty-second radio ad in September and two thirty second television ads in October. The advertisements discussed Senator D'Amato's pro-life position on abortion (September 2; October 13) and his unwillingness to protect access to women's health clinics (October 28). The second NARAL advertisement also discussed Representative Schumer's pro-choice position on abortion (October 13).

Figure 4.2 shows both candidates' and NARAL's discussion of health issues (which includes abortion) over the four month period prior to the election. The figure illustrates the dramatic increase in the number of times Senator D'Amato discussed health issues between September and November. This contrasts with Representative Schumer's discussion of health issues, which increased more gradually over the four months from July to November.

Although Senator D'Amato became increasingly more willing to discuss health issues as the election neared, Figure 4.3 reveals that he was unwilling to discuss the issue of abortion. Even with NARAL running political advertisements in September and October specifically outlining and attacking his position on the issue, he refused to discuss it. Instead, NARAL was much more successful at priming the issue for the pro-choice candidate, Representative Schumer. In the week following both NARAL's

September 2 and October 13 advertisements, Representative Schumer emphasized his position on abortion.

Figure 4.4 examines the candidates' discussion of health issues before and after the NARAL political advertisements. Rather than responding directly to the interest group's campaign advertisements, Figure 4.4 suggests that it was Representative Schumer's discussion of health issues (i.e. abortion) that finally spurred Al D'Amato to discuss health care issues. In two out of three instances Senator D'Amato escalated his discussion of health issues one week after Representative Schumer escalated his discussion of health related issues and just two weeks after the NARAL advertisements ran. This evidence suggests that interest group advertisements may have a long-term dynamic effect on candidate discussion of issues.

Furthermore, Figure 4.5 demonstrates how candidate responses can be strategic. Senator D'Amato was clearly trying to avoid discussion of his pro-life position on abortion, an unpopular position in such a liberal state as New York. Instead, he sought to re-focus voter's attention on other health related issues--particularly those important to women such as funding for breast cancer screening and research. Figure 4.5 suggests that candidates are able to maintain quite a bit of control over the particular angle of an issue they discuss even when faced with negative advertisements from interest groups.

Conclusion

The results of this study suggest that interest group advertisements can be an effective way to influence campaign dialogue. Of the twenty-four advertisements that

were examined, either one or both candidates responded to just under half of the ads (45.8%). In six instances (25% of the advertisements), the interest group advertisement evoked a very strong response, with both candidates responding to the ad. However, this study also suggests that some advertisements are more influential than others. Groups that run negative advertisements early in the campaign (before October) have a greater likelihood of having their issues incorporated into the candidate's rhetoric. The medium used to broadcast the advertisement and the actual issues discussed appear to be of lesser importance. More research remains to be done on the dynamic nature of candidate responses.

CHAPTER V

MANIPULATING THE MESSAGE:
MEDIA COVERAGE IN SENATE ELECTIONS

Candidates not only compete with each other to get their message out to the public, but also with the news media. News coverage plays an important role in framing the campaign debate because of the public's reliance on the media for information and the relative monopoly news organizations possess over specific geographic regions (Polsby and Wildavsky 2004). The news media provides a crucial link between candidate communications and voters. Media coverage of congressional campaigns can have a direct effect on both the amount of electoral information available to the public as well as the type of information voters possess to base their evaluations on (see Westlye 1991). Candidates can advocate extensive policy platforms and engage in numerous campaign activities, but unless the media transmits this information to the public, the vast majority of voters will remain unaware of the candidates' campaign activities and issue stances. Consequently, the amount, tone, and substance of news coverage a candidate receives influence the strategies candidates employ and ultimately the issues that come to dominate a campaign (Ansolabehere and Iyengar 1994; Kahn and Kenney 1999). This chapter examines fourteen Senate races in 1998 and 2000 in an effort to determine whether the media attempt to set the campaign agenda and if reporting in newspapers favors one candidate's message over another's.

Media Coverage in Elections

The media are an important actor in American elections. Newspapers, television news, and radio programs mediate between candidates and the electorate, providing voters with the information necessary to make informed decisions. Candidates do have the option of communicating directly with the public through paid advertisements (or "paid" media), but this is often a very expensive endeavor and one that few candidates are willing to rely solely on. Campaigns pay the same rates as commercial advertisers (Herrnson 2000), forcing Senate candidates in states with large metropolitan areas (i.e. New York, Los Angeles, Chicago) to outlay extensive sums of cash to communicate directly with voters. While scholars estimate that most Senate campaigns (90%)[16] do advertise on television (Herrnson 2000), the number of advertisements produced and the extent of advertisement airing varies largely across campaigns. Underfunded Senate campaigns often produce few advertisements and have limited airings of these advertisements on cable stations and during non prime-time hours on broadcast stations to save money.

Candidates often differentiate between "paid" (i.e. advertising) and "free" media (i.e. news stories) and while candidates prefer the former because they have control over their message, most realize that their limited wallets necessitate a reliance on the latter. In addition, campaign communications delivered through the "free" media have greater credibility among the public because they are delivered by what is perceived as a neutral observer (Clarke and Evans 1983). Consequently, campaigns spend extensive time

[16] Estimate by Herrnson (2000) based on 1992 Congressional Campaign Study.

trying to cultivate reporters in an effort to receive favorable coverage. Candidates and press secretaries spend numerous hours each week returning reporter's phone calls, granting interviews, and faxing press releases to members of the media, all with the goal of influencing their coverage and ultimately setting the media's campaign agenda.

Newspapers and television stations, however, are businesses whose primary goal is to deliver information while making a profit (Polsby and Wildavsky 2004). In order to attain this goal, newspapers and television stations must have a high circulation (or viewership) and a good deal of advertising—both of which are often gained by emphasizing controversy (Westlye 1991), human interest stories (Polsby and Wildavsky 2004), and horse race coverage in election years (Hershey 1984). The media, therefore, is often working under different norms and may have a different agenda from the candidates when it comes to covering elections. This makes it difficult for candidates to communicate their campaign message through the news to voters. Being the primary transmitter of information between candidates and the public, the media has the ability to play an important role in setting the campaign agenda for voters by determining the dominant themes of a campaign (Kahn 1991; Kahn and Kenney 1994). The issues a newspaper or television station decides to cover may force candidates to change their strategy (Kahn and Kenney 1999) or give one candidate an unfair advantage over the other if the candidate is perceived as being more capable of handling that particular set of issues (Petrocik 1996).

Previous research on media coverage in campaigns suggests that press biases can and do exist. Early studies of press coverage in presidential elections find that

Republicans are typically the favorite candidates of newspaper executives and this frequently translates into biases in the reporting and placement of stories within the paper (Blumberg 1954; Rowse 1975). However, one factor in particular seems to dampen this trend--newspaper reporters are overwhelmingly Democratic party identifiers (Lichter and Rothman 1981; Lichter, Rothman, and Lichter 1986). While this partisanship bias among reporters does not seem to directly translate into a liberal media bias in the news coverage of presidential elections (see Robinson 1983), it may serve to counter editorial enthusiasm for Republican candidates.

Media bias also exists in congressional races. In Senate elections, incumbents are endorsed over 80% of the time (see Kahn and Kenney 1999, 132). Similar to presidential elections, scholars have found that the editor's endorsement significantly influences the tone of campaign coverage incumbents receive; newspapers that endorse incumbents print significantly fewer criticisms than newspapers that endorse the Senator's challenger (Kahn and Kenney 1999, 129). Surprisingly, however, this trend does not exist for challengers; "the newspaper's endorsement decision does not affect the number of criticisms published about challengers" (Kahn and Kenney 1999, 129).

While media bias can be reflected through the amount and tone of coverage candidates receive, media bias (or imbalance) may also exist if the policy issues most frequently discussed in the news benefit one candidate's campaign agenda over the other candidate's agenda. Research on the media's influence on public opinion suggests that while the media are not effective at telling the public what to think, they are effective at telling the public what to think about (Iyengar and Kinder 1987). This ability to frame a

campaign debate can have a very powerful influence on voters and their electoral decisions if candidates do indeed have issues on which they are viewed advantageously by the public (Petrocik 1996).

Media Coverage of Senate Campaigns. Previous research on the media's role in Senate elections has shown that newspaper coverage of Senate campaigns is unequal across states and tends to vary with the closeness or intensity of the election, size of the newspaper, type of race, and year of election (Kahn 1991; Kahn and Kenney 1999). Based upon content analysis of newspaper coverage of Senate races, scholars have found that competitive races receive more coverage than non-competitive races--suggesting that the press reflects candidates' activities and issue positions when a race is competitive and either fails to cover or "filters" candidates' activities and issue stances when a race is not competitive (Westlye 1991; Kahn 1991; Kahn and Kenney 1999). In addition, as races become more competitive, media coverage becomes more critical (Kahn and Kenney 1999).

Previous studies have also found that the status of the candidate (incumbent v. challenger) affects news coverage. Kahn (1991) finds that in competitive elections media coverage of Senate incumbents and challengers is relatively equal, with candidates in open races receiving the greatest amount of coverage. Yet, while the number of paragraphs, articles, and headlines Kahn (1991) uses to measure coverage of both candidates may be relatively equal, the campaign themes covered and the tone used to discuss each of the candidates in the article may not be equal. Press coverage may be

biased (even if equal) if the issues discussed are beneficial to one candidate's campaign while damaging to the other candidate's electoral chances.

Previous research of electoral media coverage looks almost exclusively at newspaper coverage of campaigns and analyzes the media's activity without analyzing the source of the media's stories: the candidate's activities (see for example Westlye 1991; Kahn 1991; McCombs and Shaw 1972). Most scholars have reached conclusions about the media's role in elections from comparisons of newspaper coverage across states, congressional districts, and candidates. Yet it is difficult to reach definitive conclusions about trends in media coverage without knowing what the candidates are doing independent of the news media and what the media is choosing to cover independent of the candidates.

Kahn and Kenney (1999) conduct one of the few studies that actually compares candidate campaign messages to media coverage in an attempt to assess media bias. The authors interview 147 campaign managers from three Senate elections (1988, 1990, and 1992) in an effort to gain information on candidates' main campaign themes. Responses ranged from zero to six, with most campaign managers mentioning 2.57 issues (Kahn and Kenney 1999, 54). Issues were grouped into nine categories (economic, social programs, social problems, foreign policy, agriculture, changes in government, personal traits, negative issues, and local issues). While the majority of campaign managers participated (76% of 194), the interviews were not always conducted in a timely manner—in some cases three years after the election ended. Such a delay in obtaining the information may result in biased recall and help to explain (as reported by the

authors) why some campaign managers were unable to recall any main campaign themes at all.

In this groundbreaking study, Kahn and Kenney (1999) compare the candidates' campaign themes to the amount of media coverage the candidates received on four topics: health care, the economy, the environment, and personal experience. As with most studies on the media (Westlye 1991; Kahn 1991), news coverage comes from the largest circulating newspaper in each state. The authors analyze a sample of articles from specific sections of the newspaper (first section, state section, and editorial section) that mention either candidate from October 1 to Election Day (Kahn and Kenney 1999, 37). While this results in a substantial number of articles (6,925 across ninety-seven contested races), the study examines a rather limited time period (by focusing only on the last month of the election) and then uses a sampling procedure for half of this period[17]. Consequently, the results may not be the same as if the authors analyzed a longer time frame or used the entire universe of articles because campaigns are dynamic events and presumably the issues candidates focus on (and media coverage of these issues) shift over the course of the campaign and even from day to day. Although this is a heroic first step towards understanding agenda setting in campaigns, Kahn and Kenney's (1999) limited time frame for analyzing news coverage (1 month), sampling procedure, and static view of candidate issue emphasis (and news coverage) leaves room for future research on the dynamic nature of campaigns.

[17] Kahn and Kenney (1999) use a sampling procedure in analyzing news coverage of the 97 races they study. The authors analyze relevant articles from three sections (first, state, and editorial) of the largest circulating newspaper in the state every other day between October 1 and October 15 and every day from October 15 to Election Day.

Based on their analysis, Kahn and Kenney (1999) find that challengers who emphasize health care, the economy, the environment, and experience receive more coverage than those who do not stress those themes (Kahn and Kenney 1999, 139). Incumbents who stress those themes, however, do not receive significantly more coverage than those who do not (Kahn and Kenney 1999). In an attempt to determine which candidate had control of the media's agenda across all races, the researchers identify each candidate's main themes and then "locate" the media coverage that matched these themes. Kahn and Kenney (1999) find that in terms of the amount of coverage, incumbents are more likely to have their message covered than challengers (36 paragraphs v. 24 paragraphs). This finding is based on analysis of all incumbents and challengers (regardless of the level of competition) with candidates not being matched and compared by race.

When comparing types of messages (economic v. social) and likelihood of receiving media coverage, the authors find that challengers who emphasize only economic issues receive more news coverage than challengers who emphasize only social issues. For incumbents, press coverage does not vary depending on the themes they stress—suggesting they have less control over media coverage than challengers (Kahn and Kenney 1999). The number of issues challengers emphasize also impacts press coverage. Kahn and Kenney (1999, 150) find "every additional theme articulated by a challenger produces, on average, five more press paragraphs about that candidate's agenda" while "the number of topics emphasized by incumbents is not related to

coverage of their agendas." Their findings ultimately suggest that while incumbents receive more coverage, they have less control over it.

In an effort to study the battle over agenda setting between incumbents and challengers in individual races, Kahn and Kenney (1999) focus on the fifty-five races where they have information from both campaign managers on the candidate's main issues. For this analysis, the incumbents and challengers are matched by race. The researchers examine if press coverage is influenced by whether the candidates are emphasizing similar issues or different issues.[18] While not statistically significant, Kahn and Kenney (1999, 154) find that incumbents are slightly more successful than challengers in securing press coverage for their agenda when the candidates focus on different issues. They find that this is especially true in noncompetitive races and when incumbents are the only candidates stressing social issues (1999, 154). Challengers are only able to overcome this incumbency press advantage when the race is competitive and they emphasize economic issues. Kahn and Kenney conclude by arguing that while incumbents often "win" the agenda-setting battle, the outcome ultimately depends on candidates' choices of themes and the competitiveness of the race (1999, 156).

A major drawback to Kahn and Kenney's insightful study is that the authors fail to fully examine the media's role in the agenda setting battle the candidates engage in. Contrary to Kahn and Kenney's (1999) portrayal, the media is oftentimes more than a passive conveyor of information in this battle. Clearly the media covers not only the issues the candidates are emphasizing, but also the issues it feels are important to voters.

[18] Kahn and Kenney (1999) do not specify how this variable (candidates emphasizing same v. different issues) is measured.

Thus, while the incumbent may receive more press for his or her issues (Kahn and Kenney 1999), we do not know if these are the main issues the media is devoting coverage to. For instance, the press may decide to focus most of its attention on issues neither candidate is emphasizing such as the Monica Lewinsky scandal or the need for campaign finance reform. Kahn and Kenney (1999) have no objective measure of the issues voters are ultimately confronting in the news or any evidence of how well each candidate's message is transmitted to voters once the candidates have to compete with the media's own agenda. The authors simply "track" how much coverage each candidate's message receives without examining all of the issues the media is discussing. This chapter focuses on the media's role in the battle over the campaign agenda in greater depth.

Theoretical Overview

Candidates (especially those with limited money) are dependent on the media to communicate their message to voters. The news media, however, often have their own agenda—to pique voters' interest and sell newspapers (or increase viewership). Westlye (1991, 13) notes that candidates "must be aware of the norms of the news media, especially the need of reporters and editors to find controversy in, and to make a horse race out of, a political campaign." Consequently, the news media may decide to focus on issues other than what either of the candidates are emphasizing in an effort to create controversy and increase the size of their audience. In addition, the media's continual interest in new issues or new angles of old issues can make it very difficult for

candidates to get the main focus of their message across to voters. Scholars have noted that once a candidate's position on an issue has been reported, the issue is unlikely to receive further press coverage unless either the candidate's position on the issue changes or the issues emphasized by the campaign change (Patterson 1980; Hershey 1984; Salmore and Salmore 1989). Consequently, candidates may have a difficult time transmitting their message to voters.

Although previous research has found that the amount of coverage in competitive congressional races is relatively equal (Kahn 1991; Kahn 1997), we do not know the extent to which the content of news stories consistently favors one candidate's campaign message over the other's *once the media becomes involved in the battle over the campaign agenda*. Issue voters have limited memories; they are likely to base their decisions on the few main issues that come to dominate the campaign, regardless of whether these issues are espoused by the candidates or the press. With only limited space on the campaign agenda, the media's issues (or those emphasized by neither candidate) may push some of the candidate's main issues off of the campaign agenda and out of voters' minds. Consequently, assessing the battle over the campaign agenda necessitates a holistic approach to studying the information available to voters. Simply "tracking" media coverage of candidates' messages, as in Kahn and Kenney's study, does not adequately measure the campaign agenda, media bias/ imbalance, or the issues voters are ultimately basing their decisions on.

Since Senate campaigns are more issue oriented than either Presidential or House campaigns (Hershey 1984), this is the perfect arena to test hypotheses related to media

coverage of campaign messages. This chapter addresses two main questions: (1) Does the media attempt to set the campaign agenda? And if so, when is it most likely to do so? (2) Does the media favor one candidate's message (or agenda) over the other's? And if so, which candidate is most likely to be favored? In an effort to answer these questions, four hypotheses are examined:

A. Does the media attempt to set the campaign agenda? (and if so, when are they likely to try?)

1. The media is more likely to attempt to set the campaign agenda (by discussing issues other than what either of the candidates are emphasizing) in non-competitive races than in competitive races.

   Candidates' main campaign themes are less likely to be emphasized by the media in non-competitive Senate races because the lack of competition leads the media to largely ignore the candidates' activities and instead focus on aspects of the race and issues they expect voters to find more interesting (such as stances on presidential scandals for example). Kahn and Kenney (1999, 135) suggest that journalists assume readers are not interested in policy information about rivals in non-competitive contests and this results in not only fewer stories, but also in stories that do not focus on the candidates' chosen messages.

B. Does the media favor one candidate's message (or agenda) over the other candidate's message? And if so, which candidate is more likely to have their message favored?

1. Media coverage is more likely to favor the incumbent's message than the challenger's message.

   Incumbents are typically favored in congressional races because of the "incumbency advantage" (see Jacobson 2001). Since the vast majority of incumbents are re-elected (78% since World War II according to Jacobson 2001), the media is expected to focus their coverage on the incumbent's campaign message because the incumbent is considered the more newsworthy candidate. Although Kahn and Kenney's (1996) results are not statistically significant when they examine matched races, their results are consistent with this hypothesis.

2. Media coverage is more likely to favor the message of the candidate endorsed by the newspaper than the message of the candidate not endorsed.

   Editorial boards typically interview candidates over the course of the campaign and make recommendations to the public in the form of an official endorsement for one of the candidates. As the literature suggests, this hypothesis examines whether the endorsement goes beyond recommending one candidate over another in a single article. Rather, a newspaper that

favors one candidate over another may display this preference over the course of an election by promoting that candidate's message over his or her opponent's. This hypothesis suggests that a more subtle form of bias (or media imbalance) may exist based on the policy issues the media covers most frequently.

3. Media coverage is more likely to favor the Democratic candidate's message (or agenda) over the Republican candidate's message.

   Conventional wisdom holds the media has a liberal bias in that it favors Democratic issues and Democratic candidates. Studies that examine the political leanings of reporters traditionally find that most identify themselves with the Democratic party (Lichter and Rothman 1981; Lichter, Rothman, and Lichter 1986). Consequently, claims are often made that the reporters' "liberal biases" influence their news stories. Based on these claims, if an imbalance in news coverage of policy issues exists, the imbalance is expected to favor the Democratic candidate's campaign message over the Republican candidate's message.

Research Design

The data are based upon fourteen Senate races from the 1998 and 2000 elections where information from both the incumbent and challenger was obtained. Data on

candidate messages and issue emphasis were collected from press releases and political advertisements issued by each of the campaigns between July 1 and Election Day in November. Appendix B provides basic information on each of the candidates, including their party, previous experience, election vote total, and number of press releases and campaign advertisements issued. Policy issues were content analyzed and coded (according to Appendix A) only the first time they were mentioned in the text of either a press release or campaign advertisement. The issue coding scheme is an extension of one developed by Baumgartner and Jones (1993). The policy issues discussed by each candidate were than tallied and the candidate's **range of issues** (total number of issues discussed) and **central campaign message** (comprised of the three most frequently mentioned issues) were compared across pairs of candidates in the same race.

To measure media coverage of the fourteen Senate races, newspaper articles were collected over the same period (July-November) from a major newspaper in each state.[19] Newspaper articles were obtained using the on-line databases Lexis-Nexus and Newsbank. Searches were conducted using variations of each candidate's name. Appendix C lists each of the newspapers, their circulations, the number of articles mentioning each of the Senate candidates, and percent of news stories that discussed policy issues. Newspaper articles were content analyzed using the same policy issue coding scheme discussed above for the candidate press releases and political advertisements. Issues were only coded the first time they were mentioned in the article.

[19] The newspaper with the largest circulation is used whenever possible, however the on-line databases Lexus-Nexus and Newsbank do not provide access to all newspapers in a given state. Furthermore, newspapers that were deemed to have a national constituency (such as the *New York Times* and *Los Angeles Times*) are not used because more state oriented newspapers are expected to provide better and more abundant coverage of elections in that state.

Each **candidate's central campaign message** (three most frequently mentioned issues) was then compared to the **media's central campaign information** (three most frequently cited issues by the newspaper).

The media covered a wider range of policy issues than the candidates actually discussed in their press releases and campaign advertisements. On average, candidates discussed issues in 14 of the 20 issue areas coded (see Appendix A), while news coverage typically focused on 18 of the 20 issue areas coded. This discrepancy largely exists because the candidates emphasized different issues in the same race and the news stories focus on both candidate's current issues positions and past actions/issues positions. Evidently voters are being presented with a wide range of information to base their decision on. This discrepancy also suggests, however, that the candidates may have a difficult time shaping the media's coverage of their campaign.

Appendix E presents the central campaign themes (or three issues most frequently mentioned) for each of the candidates in the fourteen Senate races under study. The percent each issue area comprised of the candidate's total dialogue on policy issues illustrates how important the issue area was to the candidate's overall campaign message. Appendix D also presents the issues most frequently discussed by the media (or the media's central campaign information) along with the percent of total coverage the issue received in each newspaper.

Dependent Variable. The dependent variable is the degree of overlap between the **candidate's central campaign message** (three most frequently discussed issues) and the **media's central campaign information** (three most frequently cited issues by the

newspaper). Races where the media focused only on issues the candidates were emphasizing have no agenda setting discrepancy.[20] Races where the newspaper focused on one or more issues that neither candidate was emphasizing are considered to have an agenda setting discrepancy between the candidates and the media. The agenda setting discrepancy (between the candidates and the media) is considered to be "extensive" if (1) the primary issue covered by the news media (or the issue most often discussed in news articles) was emphasized by neither candidate or if (2) two or more of the three main issues focused on by the news were not part of either candidate's main emphasis. The agenda setting discrepancy is considered "minimal" if one of the three main issues focused on by the news was not part of either candidate's main emphasis. Again, the agenda setting discrepancy is considered "nonexistent" if the media's three main issues reflect either one or both of the candidates' main issues.

In addition, races where the newspaper covered each candidate's main campaign issues equally are considered to have "balanced coverage," while races where one candidate's main issues were covered more than the opponent's are considered to have "unbalanced coverage." This was measured by subtracting the number of candidate A's main campaign issues that were covered by the press from candidate B's main campaign issues that were covered by the press (see Appendix D). If the resulting number was greater than zero, the race was categorized as having "unbalanced coverage." If the resulting number was zero or if the two candidates' central campaign messages were

[20] In such cases, the media coverage merely reflects the policy issues the candidates are emphasizing.

exactly the same (as was the case in Indiana and New York in 2000), then the media was considered to have "balanced coverage."

Independent variables. The independent variables that will be examined are related to competition[21], incumbency, editorial endorsements, and the partisanship of the candidate. As stated above, incumbents are expected to have their campaign message favored over the challenger (Kahn and Kenney 1999). In addition, the candidate favored by the editors is expected to receive more favorable coverage of his/her campaign message than the candidate not endorsed by the newspaper. Furthermore, based on previous research on the partisanship of reporters, Democrats are expected to receive more favorable coverage of their campaign messages.

Findings

News coverage of the fourteen Senate races varied substantially (see Appendix C). The competitive 2000 Virginia Senate race between George Allen (R) and Charles Robb (D) received the largest amount of media coverage (345 stories). The 2000 Indiana Senate race between Dick Lugar (R) and David Johnson (D) received the least amount of media coverage (63 stories). Similar to the finding in previous studies, more competitive races received more coverage.

[21] Races were divided into three categories (highly competitive, moderately competitive, and not competitive) based on poll results reported by National Journal in late September/early October of the election year. Races where there were 10 or fewer percentage points between the candidates are considered to be "highly competitive," while races where there were 20 or more percentage points separating the candidates were considered "not competitive." Races in between (with 11-19 percentage points separating candidates) were considered "moderately competitive."

The first question this chapter will address is: does the media attempt to set the campaign agenda by focusing on issues other than what the candidates are emphasizing? The data suggest "yes." As Table 5.1 illustrates, discrepancies exist between the main issues covered in the newspapers and the candidates' central messages in ten of the fourteen (71.4%) Senate races. Very seldom did the newspaper focus its main coverage simply on the issues the candidates were emphasizing. Rather the media often chose to focus on issues neither of the candidates were stressing, such as governmental affairs (the Monica Lewinsky scandal, government reform, etc) the environment, macroeconomic issues (taxes, economic recession, etc), crime, and agriculture. In eight of the fourteen races (57.1%), the media discrepancy was "extensive," with news coverage focusing 25.3% of its attention (on average) on issues other than what the candidates were discussing.

I hypothesize that "extensive" discrepancies between media coverage and candidate messages are more likely to occur in non-competitive races as the media attempts to bring attention to issues it expects voters to find more interesting than what the candidates are discussing. However, as Table 5.2 illustrates this is not the case. Competition (or the lack thereof) does not explain why these "extensive" discrepancies exist in some races; competitive races are just as likely as non-competitive races to experience "extensive" discrepancies between candidate issue emphasis and media coverage. In Michigan's highly competitive 2000 Senate race for instance, Debbie Stabenow and Spencer Abraham emphasized health, education, social welfare, and macroeconomic issues, while the *Detroit Free Press* focused its attention largely on

governmental affairs and environmental issues. Contrary to what Kahn and Kenney's (1999) findings suggest, candidates even in competitive races can have a difficult time getting their message across to voters when they have to compete with the media's own preferences. The media is not simply a democratic amplifier for candidates to use—but instead an interpreter of information, sometimes with its own agenda.

I turn now to the question of media "balance:" is the media even handed when covering candidates' campaign messages? The results are presented in Table 5.3. In half (seven) of the Senate races examined (Arizona, California, Illinois, New York [1998], Ohio, Oregon, and Florida), the media did indeed favor one candidate's campaign message over the other. In each of these cases, the newspaper covered extensively a majority of one candidate's main issues, while covering only a minority (1 or less) of the opponent's main campaign issues. Thus, in half of the races, media coverage helped one of the candidates to structure the electoral alternatives for issue voters.

Three of the seven candidates who benefited from the media's coverage are: Barbara Boxer (D-CA), Mary Boyle (D-OH), and Bill Nelson (D-FL). In Barbara Boxer's case, the *San Francisco Chronicle* covered two of her main issues extensively (health and crime), while covering only one of her opponent's main issues extensively (governmental affairs). Similarly, in Ohio, Mary Boyle had two of her main issues covered extensively by the *Columbus Dispatch* (education and the environment), while only one of her opponent's main issues was covered extensively (education). In Florida, all three of Bill Nelson's main campaign issues were covered extensively by the *Tampa*

Tribune, while only one of his opponent's main issues (governmental affairs) was covered extensively. In the other seven cases where there was no media imbalance (Arkansas, Missouri, Indiana, Michigan, New Jersey, New York [2000], and Virginia), each newspaper covered the candidate's main issues equally. For example, in Virginia, both Allen's major issues (education and macroeconomic issues) and Robb's major issues (education and crime) received the bulk of the media's attention. While the results presented in Table 5.3 are not overwhelming support that the media favors some candidates over others, the results do suggest that newspapers are not always neutral providers of information.

The next question to address is: can one predict when media "imbalance" will exist? The main explanatory variable suggested by the literature is competition (Kahn 1991; Westlye 1991). Based on previous studies (Westlye 1991; Kahn 1991; Kahn and Kenney 1999), one would expect that the more competitive a race is, the less likely there is to be an "imbalance" because more information is available about the candidates and since the race is more interesting, more stories are being written by reporters. However, as Table 5.4 illustrates, this is not a plausible explanation based on the fourteen cases examined here. Newspaper coverage of competitive races was just as likely to favor one candidate's agenda as news coverage of non-competitive races. Additional cases and further study may help to shed light on this area in the future. There may be internal factors relevant to the newspaper (such as the number of reporters covering the race) that influence whether there is a media imbalance in favor of one candidate's agenda.

The last question to address is: when media coverage is "unbalanced," can one predict which candidate will benefit? Tables 5.5, 5.6, and 5.7 address this question. As Table 5.5 illustrates, while incumbents may be favored when it comes to the amount of news coverage they receive (Kahn 1991; Kahn and Kenney 1999), they are not necessarily advantaged when it comes to the topics discussed. Of the five Senate races with both a news coverage "imbalance" and an incumbent running, incumbents' issues were discussed more often than the challenger's issues in two states (California and Illinois). This is consistent with Kahn and Kenney's (1999, 158) finding that while incumbents receive more coverage, they have less control over it; "although incumbents typically receive more news coverage than challengers, they are less effective in shaping the content of their coverage. Press coverage of incumbents does not depend upon the senators' choices of campaign messages." This chapter not only suggests that incumbents have less control over "shaping the content" of their coverage, but in some races they may be frequently asked to comment on and discuss the challenger's main campaign issues.

Newspaper endorsements also seem to have little effect in determining which candidate's campaign agenda was favored in press coverage (see Table 5.6). Charles Schumer of New York (1998) was the only candidate to be endorsed by the newspaper editors and to have his message favored in the press coverage of the race. In all of the other races, the candidate endorsed by the editors was not the candidate whose message was favored. This suggests that the newspaper editors do not have firm control over the

content of news stories—if they did, one would assume that the candidate receiving the endorsement would have his or her main issues covered more often.

Finally, does the partisanship of the candidate matter when it comes to the content of news coverage? Table 5.7 suggests that it does. In six of the seven Senate races with a media coverage "imbalance," the candidate favored by the topics discussed in the press coverage is a Democrat. This is supported by earlier studies that find most reporters identify themselves with the Democratic party (Lichter and Rothman 1981; Lichter, Rothman, and Lichter 1986). This finding suggests that reporters may actually have more control over the content of news coverage than newspaper editors.

The obvious limitation to these findings is that they are based only on content analysis of the policy topics discussed in the news and not the actual tone of the news coverage. Consequently, while the issues discussed in the news are more likely to favor Democratic candidates when there is "unbalanced" media coverage, there is no measure of whether these issues are discussed in a favorable or unfavorable manner.

Conclusion

Based on an analysis of fourteen Senate races from 1998 and 2000, it does appear that candidates are not only competing with each other, but also with the media to get their message across to voters. The media is not simply a democratic amplifier for candidates to use—but instead an interpreter of information, often times with its own agenda. Very seldom did the newspaper focus its main coverage simply on the issues

the candidates were emphasizing; instead, discrepancies between the candidates' messages and media coverage existed in ten of the fourteen (71.4%) Senate races studied. Furthermore, in eight of the fourteen races (57.1%), the discrepancy was "extensive," with roughly one-quarter of the media's attention focused on issues other than what the candidates were discussing. Contrary to previous findings (Westlye 1991; Kahn 1991; Kahn and Kenney 1999), this chapter suggests that even in competitive races candidates have a difficult time getting their message across to voters because they have to compete with the media's own preferences.

In addition, the results presented in this chapter suggest that sometimes press coverage favors one candidate's campaign message over the other's. In half (seven) of the Senate races examined, media coverage was even-handed of the candidates' main issues. In the other half (Arizona, California, Illinois, New York [1998], Ohio, Oregon, and Florida) however, the topics covered in the news stories did indeed favor one candidate's campaign message over the other. Competition (or the lack thereof) does not explain when this favoritism is likely to exist. In attempting to understand which candidate the media favors when an "imbalance" in coverage exists, a number of plausible explanations are examined. The best explanation for understanding this "imbalance" appears to be the candidate's partisanship. In six of the seven Senate races where one candidate's campaign message was favored over the opponent's, the partisanship of the candidate receiving the favorable coverage is Democratic. The main limitation to this finding, however, is that it is based only on content analysis of the policy topics discussed in the news and not the tone of the news coverage.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION:

STRUGGLING TO SET THE CAMPAIGN AGENDA

Democracy is best described as a struggle over competing ideals or values. In the United States, this struggle over competing ideals takes place in many different political arenas. It can take place on the floor of Congress, between the justices of the Supreme Court, or during a presidential cabinet meeting. This dissertation focuses on the struggle between candidates and their respective messages in the electoral arena. Focusing on fourteen Senate races from 1998 and 2000, I examine in depth how the struggle over competing ideals takes place and if some candidates are more successful than others at navigating their message through the political environment to voters.

Chapter III examines the impact of candidate skills and resources as well as state characteristics on the strategies candidates employ when emphasizing campaign issues. Previous research on candidate positioning and issue emphasis suggests that candidates in the same race can employ either a unidimensional strategy (emphasizing different positions on the same issues) or a multidimensional strategy (emphasizing different issues altogether). The analysis presented here reveals that candidates employ both strategies. In half of the fourteen Senate races, candidates employed a unidimensional strategy, choosing to campaign on the same issues. In the other seven races they employed a multidimensional strategy, choosing to campaign on different issues.

Petrocik's (1996) "issue ownership" theory is not supported by this study. While in seven of the races there were clear differences in the issues candidates chose to campaign on, the issues emphasized by Republican and Democratic candidates do not match Petrocik's predictions. Republican candidates tended to focus their rhetoric on macroeconomic, education, social welfare, defense, and foreign policy issues, while Democratic candidates made health, education, and crime their central focus. According to Petrocik, education and social welfare are "Democratic" issues, while crime is a "Republican" issue. This suggests that either the partisan advantage each of the parties has on certain issues does not really exist, or candidates in each of these two elections chose to either "lease" the opposing party's issues for strategic reasons.[22] The findings also suggest that Republican candidates were slightly more willing to "lease" issues than their Democratic counterparts.

Four hypotheses related to candidate quality, candidate spending, state diversity, and state competitiveness were examined in an effort to understand why some candidates employ a multidimensional strategy and others use a unidimensional strategy in emphasizing campaign issues. Of these, state party competition appears to offer the most plausible explanation for the variation in candidate strategies across the states. In states where there is traditionally a higher level of inter-party competition (Oregon New Jersey, Ohio, and Michigan), candidates were more likely to concentrate on the same issues. In states where there was traditionally a lower level of inter-party competition

[22] This study does not examine sub-issues within each of the twenty different issue areas. Consequently, I cannot determine for certain if the issues are being "leased" or "stolen" by candidates of the opposing party because I have no measure of how the issue is actually being discussed. However, this analysis reveals that Republican and Democratic candidates are not restricted to campaigning simply on issues "owned" by their respective party.

(Arkansas, Missouri, Virginia, and Arizona), candidates are more likely focus their campaign messages on different issues.

This is contrary to what was hypothesized. Competition, rather than encouraging a multi-dimensional campaign strategy, appears to promote convergence towards the median voter and a unidimensional strategy. In such states, the issues voters care most about (according to polls) are likely to be addressed by both candidates as they attempt to accrue as many votes as possible. This could have important implications for theories of representation—in competitive states where voters are most likely to have information and be attentive, the candidates may actually provide fewer issue alternatives and ultimately less choice than in less competitive races.

Chapter IV examines the impact of interest group advertising on the candidates' campaign dialogue. In recent elections, interest groups have begun to play more of a direct role in House, Senate, and Presidential campaigns. Through the use of political advertisements they attempt to influence the issues candidates emphasize, the basis on which informed voters make their decisions, and the eventual outcome of the election. This relatively recent development (see Jacobson 1999) may make it more difficult for candidates to set the campaign agenda and transmit their message to voters. Interest group advertisements are exceedingly dangerous to ignore (see Jacobson 1999)--forcing candidates to address issues they would otherwise choose to avoid.

Interest groups were quite active running campaign advertisements in seven of the fourteen races under study (NY 1998; CA 1998; NY 2000; VA 2000; NJ 2000; MI 2000; FL 2000). Twelve interest groups ran 24 television and radio advertisements

between July 10 and Election Day (November 3 in 1998 and November 7 in 2000). Of the twenty-four advertisements that were run, at least one candidates responded to nearly half of the ads (45.8%). In six instances (25% of the advertisements), the interest group advertisement evoked a very strong response, with both candidates responding to the ad.

A number of hypotheses are tested in an effort to predict when candidates are likely to respond to interest group advertisements. Candidates are expected to respond when they perceive interest group ads to be influential and threatening—that is when the advertisements are negative, broadcast over the television, aired toward the end of the election, and focus on one of the candidate's main issues.

The findings suggest that interest groups can be effective at influencing campaign dialogue. The potential to affect the campaign helps to understand why many groups have chosen to become directly involved in recent elections. Running issue oriented advertisements not only provides interest groups with the ability to influence the basis on which informed voters evaluate the candidates, but it also gives them the opportunity to influence candidate behavior and campaign dialogue. The results of this study suggest that some interest group advertisements are more influential than others. Groups that run negative advertisements early in the campaign (before October) have a greater likelihood of having their issues incorporated into the candidate's rhetoric. The medium (radio verses television) used to broadcast the advertisement and the actual issues discussed appear to be of lesser importance.

Candidates not only compete with each other and interest groups to get their message out to the public, but also with the news media. News coverage plays an

important role in framing the campaign debate because of the public's reliance on the media for information and the relative monopoly news organizations possess over specific geographic regions (Polsby and Wildavsky 2004). The news media provides a crucial link between candidate communications and voters. Media coverage of congressional campaigns can have a direct effect on both the amount of electoral information available to the public as well as the type of information voters possess to base their evaluations on (see Westlye 1991).

Chapter V compares each candidate's core message to the campaign information transmitted by the media to voters. Based on an analysis of fourteen Senate races from 1998 and 2000, it does appear that candidates are not only competing with each other, but also with the media to get their message across to voters. The media is not simply a democratic amplifier for candidates to use—but instead an interpreter of information, often times with its own agenda. Very seldom did the newspaper focus its main coverage simply on the issues the candidates were emphasizing; instead, the media engaged in some form of agenda setting in ten of the fourteen (71.4%) Senate races studied. Furthermore, in eight of the fourteen races (57.1%), the media engaged in "extensive" agenda setting by focusing roughly one-quarter of its attention on issues other than what the candidates were discussing. Contrary to previous findings (Westlye 1991; Kahn 1991; Kahn and Kenney 1999), this suggests that even in competitive races candidates have a difficult time getting their message across to voters because they have to compete with the media's own preferences.

Not only does the media have its own agenda, but sometimes press coverage favors one candidate's campaign message over the other's. In half (seven) of the Senate races examined, media coverage was even-handed of the candidates' main issues. In the other half (Arizona, California, Illinois, New York [1998], Ohio, Oregon, and Florida) however, the topics covered in the news stories did indeed favor one candidate's campaign message over the other. Competition (or the lack thereof) does not explain when this favoritism is likely to exist. In attempting to understand which candidate the media favors when an "imbalance" exists, a number of plausible explanations are examined related to the status of the candidate status (incumbent v. challenger), editorial endorsement, and partisanship of the candidate. The best explanation for understanding this news coverage "imbalance" appears to be the candidate's partisanship. In six of the seven Senate races where one candidate's campaign message was favored over the opponent's, the partisanship of the candidate receiving the favorable coverage is Democratic. The main limitation to this finding, however, is that this study is based only on content analysis of the policy topics discussed in the news and not the tone of the news coverage.

In conclusion, candidates face a number of obstacles in trying to transmit their campaign message to voters. In addition to struggling against their opponent, candidates have to struggle against both interest groups and the media to get their message to voters. Just under one-half of the advertisements interest groups ran were successful at interjecting issues into the campaign debate (at least temporarily). Furthermore, the media discussed issues other than what the candidates were focusing on in over seventy

percent of the Senate races included in this study. In eight of the fourteen races (57.1%), the agenda setting was "extensive," with the media focusing roughly one-quarter of its attention on issues other than what the candidates were discussing. While this may have the positive benefit of infusing more issues into the debate, it may also blur the lines of accountability—particularly if candidates have no intention of acting on issues emphasized exclusively by the media.

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APPENDIX A

POLICY ISSUE AREAS

Policy Issue Areas:

Macroeconomic Issues (budget, income tax, economy, national debt, general government expenditures)
Health (Medicaid/Medicare, HMO issues, hospitals/health research facilities, abortion, women's, children's, and elderly health issues, legal issues related to health care)
Agriculture (farming, agriculture research, food safety/pesticide use, ranching, irrigation/water supply issues, aquaculture, ranching)
Labor (employment opportunities, women's employment issues, retirement planning/pensions, labor unions, minimum wage, youth employment, foreign and migrant workers, minority & disabled employment, job training, worker safety issues, work-family issues)
Education (education reform/charter & voucher schools, pre-primary education, public school funding, teacher training & testing, school safety, religion in schools, post-secondary education issues, vocational education training, educational administration, minority & disabled education issues)
Environment (environmental rules/regulations, corporate pollution, water pollution & non-agricultural water resource management, air pollution, international environmental issues, waste disposal, land management, species protection, ocean pollution/ocean resource management)
Energy (electric power, fossil fuels, renewable energy, nuclear power/nuclear power plants, international energy issues)
Transportation (motor vehicle issues, airlines, mass transportation, ship transportation, rail transportation, truck transportation, infrastructure & development)
Family Issues (marital issues, child rearing issues, child care, general gender issues)
Crime (criminal penalties, law enforcement/police issues, judicial system, crime prevention/community policing, domestic violence, gun control, prisons, drug abuse/enforcement, white collar crimes, minority & gender crime issues, child crime issues/child custody issues)
Social Welfare and Elderly Issues (elderly/disabled issues, welfare/welfare reform, social security, estate issues, charitable programs)
Housing (home ownership, public housing, property related/real estate issues)
Business and Banking Issues (government subsidies, corporate litigation, small business issues, stock exchange/investment issues, consumer protection, business taxes, banking practices, insurance industry issues, women's business issues)
Defense (veterans' issues, national security, military readiness/defense spending, military bases/personnel, military weapons, military conflicts involving the United States)
Science and Technology (NASA/space programs, telecommunications issues, television/internet issues, technology issues, government research programs)
Foreign Trade (imports, exports, trade agreements & policies)
Foreign Policy (international relations & diplomatic issues, international banking/finance, foreign aid/international disaster relief, international alliances/international organization issues, human rights/international ethnic issues, international terrorism & crimes)
Governmental Affairs (Native American issues, civil rights issues, non-work related immigration issues, issues related to U.S. territories, government waste, institutional reform; presidential appointments, presidential investigations/scandals, domestic disaster relief)
Electoral Issues (campaign finance reform issues, voter participation issues)
State & Local (federalism, state fiscal issues, state and local development/zoning, state promotion of arts & sciences, state & local government appointments, state institutional reform)

APPENDIX B

SELECT 1998 AND 2000 SENATE RACES: GENERAL ELECTION CANDIDATE EXPERIENCE, VOTE TOTAL, NUMBER OF CAMPAIGN PRESS RELEASES & POLITICAL ADVERTISEMENTS (JULY-NOVEMBER)

Appendix B

State	Party	Candidate's Previous Experience	1998 General Election Vote Total*	Press Releases	Campaign Advertisements
Arizona (1998)					
McCain	R	Incumbent	69%	74	0
Ranger	D	Environmental Lawyer	27%	15	0
Arkansas (1998)					
Lincoln	D	U.S. House Representative	55%	55	6
Boozman	R	Ophthalmologist	42%	28	4
California (1998)					
Boxer	D	Incumbent	53%	13	6
Fong	R	California State Treasurer	43%	35	5
Illinois (1998)					
Fitzgerald	R	Illinois State Senator	50%	40	4
Mosley-Braun	D	Incumbent	47%	16	6
Missouri (1998)					
Bond	R	Incumbent	53%	11	6
Nixon	D	Missouri State Attorney General	44%	27	5
New York (1998)					
Schumer	D	U.S. House Representative	55%	52	20
D'Amato	R	Incumbent	44%	55	19
Ohio (1998)					
Voinovich	R	Governor of Ohio	56.5%	37	2
Boyle	D	Ohio Cuyahoga County Commissioner	43.5%	34	1

Appendix B Continued

State	Party	Candidate's Previous Experience	1998 General Election Vote Total*	Press Releases	Campaign Advertisements
Oregon (1998)					
Wyden	D	Incumbent	61%	11	3
Lim	R	Oregon State Senator	34%	17	0
Florida (2000)					
Nelson	D	State Insurance Commissioner	51%	29	2
McCollum	R	U.S. House Representative	46%	24	2
Indiana (2000)					
Lugar	R	Incumbent	67%	20	1
Johnson	D	Attorney	32%	15	1
Michigan (2000)					
Stabenow	D	U.S. House Representative	49.5%	27	8
Abraham	R	Incumbent	48%	62	6
New Jersey (2000)					
Corzine	D	Former Co-chairman Goldman Sachs	50%	26	9
Franks	R	U.S. House Representative	47%	67	4
New York (2000)					
Clinton	D	Former First Lady	55%	146	25
Lazio	R	U.S. House Representative	43%	454	28
Virginia (2000)					
Allen	R	Former Governor	52%	23	12
Robb	D	Incumbent	48%	23	14

*General election vote total from the Federal Election Commission (www.fec.gov)

APPENDIX C

CANDIDATE QUALITY, SPENDING, AND THE RANGE OF ISSUE AREAS DISCUSSED IN SELECT 1998 AND 2000 SENATE RACES

Appendix C

State	Party	Candidate Quality	Candidate Quality Score (Squire and Smith 1996)	Candidate Spending (per constituent)	Issue Areas Discussed
Arizona (1998)					
McCain	R	Incumbent	6	.53	19
Ranger	D	Low Quality Challenger	0	.08	13
Arkansas (1998)					
Lincoln	D	High Quality Candidate	1.25	1.23	14
Boozman	R	Low Quality Candidate	0	.43	11
California (1998)					
Boxer	D	Incumbent	6	.42	10
Fong	R	High Quality Challenger	3	.33	18
Florida (2000)					
Nelson	D	High Quality Candidate	3	.42	18
McCollum	R	High Quality Candidate	.22	.54	17
Illinois (1998)					
Fitzgerald	R	Low Quality Challenger	.03	1.22	14
Mosley-Braun	D	Incumbent	6	.60	12
Indiana (2000)					
Lugar	R	Incumbent	6	.70	10
Johnson	D	Low Quality Challenger	0	.24	9
Michigan (2000)					
Stabenow	D	High Quality Challenger	.31	.83	15
Abraham	R	Incumbent	6	1.31	16

Appendix C Continued

State	Party	Candidate Quality	Candidate Quality Score (Squire and Smith 1996)	Candidate Spending (per constituent)	Issue Areas Discussed
Missouri (1998)					
Bond	R	Incumbent	6	.63	6
Nixon	D	High Quality Challenger	3	.26	11
New Jersey (2000)					
Corzine	D	Low Quality Candidate	0	7.51	14
Franks	R	High Quality Candidate	.38	.76	16
New York (1998)					
Schumer	D	High Quality Challenger	.16	.92	14
D'Amato	R	Incumbent	6	1.33	18
New York (2000)					
Clinton	D	High Quality Candidate	6	1.57	20
Lazio	R	High Quality Candidate	.16	2.14	21
Ohio (1998)					
Voinovich	R	High Quality Candidate	6	.60	16
Boyle	D	Low Quality Candidate	.25	.20	13
Oregon (1998)					
Wyden	D	Incumbent	6	.87	11
Lim	R	Low Quality Challenger	.07	.13	8
Virginia (2000)					
Allen	R	High Quality Challenger	6	2.82	16
Robb	D	Incumbent	6	.96	11

Data source: Federal Election Commission (www.fec.gov) and *Almanac of American Politics* 2000 and 2002.

APPENDIX D

NEWSPAPER COVERAGE OF SELECT 1998 AND 2000 SENATE RACES

(JULY-NOVEMBER)

Appendix D

State	Newspaper	Circulation	Number of Stories Discussing Either Candidate	Percent of Stories Discussing Policy Issues
Arizona	***Arizona Republic***	448,782	128	67%
Arkansas	***Arkansas Democrat-Gazette***	185,709	262	61%
California	***San Francisco Chronicle***	512,129	183	76%
Illinois	***Chicago Sun Times***	479,584	216	56%
Missouri	***St. Louis Post-Dispatch***	287,424	275	81%
New York (1998)	***Buffalo News***	223,957	204	65%
Ohio	***Columbus Dispatch***	251,557	275	76%
Oregon	***Oregonian***	342,789	82	63%
Florida	***Tampa Tribune***	320,000	116	66%
Indiana	***Indianapolis Star***	254,624	63	90%
Michigan	***Detroit Free Press***	368,839	88	51%
New Jersey	***The Record (Bergen County)***	160,000	242	52%
New York (2000)	***Buffalo News***	223,957	330	62%
Virginia	***Richmond Times Dispatch***	187,409	345	70%

APPENDIX E

MAJOR POLICY ISSUES DISCUSSED BY CANDIDATES AND MEDIA IN SELECT 1998 AND 2000 SENATE RACES

Appendix E

State (Election Year)	Republican Candidate's Major Issues (% of Candidate's Dialogue)	Democratic Candidate's Major Issues (% of Candidate's Dialogue)	Newspaper's Major Issue Focus (% of Stories Covering Issue)
Arizona	***McCain (Incumbent)**+***	***Ranger***	***Arizona Republic***
(1998)	Defense (16.6)	Foreign Policy (16.6)	Environment (24.5)
	Governmental Affairs (12.2)	**Electoral Issues (16.6)**	Business (15.5)
	Foreign Policy (9.6)	Crime (10.0)	**Electoral Issues (12.7)**
		Education (10.0)	
Arkansas	***Boozman+***	***Lincoln*****	***Arkansas Democrat-Gazette***
(1998)	**Macroeconomic (18.9)**	**Health (18.9)**	Governmental Affairs (13.2)
	Education (16.2)	Education (18.9)	**Health (13.0)**
	Defense (16.2)	Social Welfare (16.3)	**Macroeconomic (12.1)**
California	***Fong+***	***Boxer (Incumbent)*****	***San Francisco Chronicle***
(1998)	Macroeconomic (11.2)	**Health (16.6)**	**Governmental Affairs (15.7)**
	Education (11.2)	Environment (16.6)	**Health (11.5)**
	Governmental Affairs (11.2)	Agriculture (13.3)	**Crime (10.2)**
		Crime (13.3)	

Appendix E Continued

State (Election Year)	Republican Candidate's Major Issues (% of Candidate's Dialogue)	Democratic Candidate's Major Issues (% of Candidate's Dialogue)	Newspaper's Major Issue Focus (% of Stories Covering Issue)
Illinois	***Fitzgerald**+***	***Mosley-Braun (Incumbent)***	***Chicago Sun-Times***
(1998)	Foreign Policy (17.7)	**Crime (23.3)**	Governmental Affairs (16.9)
	Crime (13.3)	Education (21.6)	**Health (15.2)**
	Marital/ Family (11.1)	**Health (16.6)**	**Crime (11.8)**
	Social Welfare (11.1)		
Missouri	***Bond (Incumbent)*****	***Nixon+***	***St. Louis Post-Dispatch***
(1998)	**Crime (41.6)**	**Crime (31)**	**Business (15.6)**
	Macroeconomic (16.6)	**Business (13.7)**	**Crime (11.4)**
	Education (16.6)	Governmental Affairs (13.7)	**Education (10.4)**
New York	***D'Amato (Incumbent)***	***Schumer**+***	***Buffalo News***
(1998)	Health (13.8)	**Crime (20)**	Macroeconomic (15.3)
	Education (13.8)	Health (20)	**Crime (12.1)**
	Social Welfare (9.9)	Education (14.8)	Governmental Affairs (10.2)
Ohio	***Voinovich**+***	***Boyle***	***Columbus Dispatch***
(1998)	Governmental Affairs (11.9)	**Education (24.1)**	State & Local (22.8)
	Macroeconomic (10.4)	Macroeconomic (12.9)	**Education (10.4)**
	Education (10.4)	**Environment (11.2)**	Crime (7.5)
	Social Welfare (10.4)		**Environment (7.5)**

Appendix E. Continued

State (Election Year)	Republican Candidate's Major Issues (% of Candidate's Dialogue)	Democratic Candidate's Major Issues (% of Candidate's Dialogue)	Newspaper's Major Issue Focus (% of Stories Covering Issue)
Oregon	***Lim***	***Wyden (Incumbent)**+***	***Portland Oregonian***
(1998)	**Governmental Affairs (21.4)**	Macroeconomic (27.7)	Agriculture (12.0)
	Defense (14.2)	Health (27.7)	**Governmental Affairs (10.4)**
	Crime (14.2)	Education (27.7)	Labor (10.4)
	Education (14.2)		
	Macroeconomic (14.2)		
Florida	***McCollum+***	***Nelson*****	***Tampa Tribune***
(2000)	Macroeconomic (16.3)	**Business (16.8)**	**Business (16.9)**
	Governmental Affairs (13.8)	**Health (12.9)**	**Governmental Affairs (14.4)**
	Social Welfare (12.5)	**Governmental Affairs (10.9)**	Crime (11.3)
			Health (11.3)
Indiana	***Lugar (Incumbent)**+***	***Johnson***	***Indianapolis Star***
(2000)	Education (23.3)	**Health (25.9)**	Foreign Policy (19.5)
	Health (20.0)	Education (22.2)	**Social Welfare (11.7)**
	Social Welfare (10.0)	**Social Welfare (20.4)**	**Health (10.4)**
			Agriculture (10.4)
Michigan	***Abraham (Incumbent)***	***Stabenow**+***	***Detroit Free Press***
(2000)	Macroeconomic (21.6)	**Health (27.5)**	Governmental Affairs (12.2)
	Health (16.4)	Education (13.0)	Environment (12.2)
	Social Welfare (15.5)	Social Welfare (11.6)	**Health (10.2)**

Appendix E. Continued

State (Election Year)	Republican Candidate's Major Issues (% of Candidate's Dialogue)	Democratic Candidate's Major Issues (% of Candidate's Dialogue)	Newspaper's Major Issue Focus (% of Stories Covering Issue)
New Jersey	***Franks+***	***Corzine*****	***Bergen County Record***
(2000)	Social Welfare (15.1)	**Health (22.5)**	**Health (14.8)**
	Macroeconomic (14.0)	Social Welfare (13.8)	Macroeconomic (11.9)
	Education (12.8)	**Education (11.2)**	**Education (10.7)**
		Environment (11.2)	
New York	***Lazio***	***Clinton**+***	***Buffalo News***
(2000)	**Health (17.3)**	**Health (16.1)**	**Macroeconomic (16.8)**
	Macroeconomic (12.3)	Education 14.5)	Governmental Affairs (12.0)
	Education (10.0)	**Macroeconomic (12.7)**	**Health (11.2)**
Virginia	***Allen**+***	***Robb (Incumbent)***	***Richmond Times Dispatch***
(2000)	**Education (18.0)**	**Education (24.7)**	**Education (14.5)**
	Macroeconomic (12.6)	**Crime (15.0)**	**Crime (12.2)**
	Social Welfare (12.0)	Health (12.3)	**Macroeconomic (11.0)**

** denotes the eventual winner of the race
+ denotes the candidate the newspaper endorsed

APPENDIX F

INTEREST GROUP ADVERTISEMENTS BROADCAST IN SELECT 1998 AND 2000 SENATE RACES

Appendix F

State	Election Year	Interest Group	Candidate Discussed in Advertisement	Initial Date Ad Aired
NY	2000	Peace Action	Lazio	9/5
VA	2000	Voters For Choice	Allen/ Robb	10/19
VA	2000	Handgun Control	Allen	7/13
VA	2000	National Right to Work	Robb	10/23
VA	2000	Sierra Club	Allen/ Robb	10/2
VA	2000	Sierra Club/ NAACP	Allen	9/18
NJ	2000	Peace Action	Franks	9/5
MI	2000	US Immigration Reform PAC	Abraham	10/23
MI	2000	Business Roundtable	Abraham	10/26
MI	2000	Sierra Club	Abraham	10/2
MI	2000	Human Rights Campaign	Abraham	9/26
MI	2000	Sierra Club/ NAACP	Abraham	9/18
MI	2000	Peace Action	Abraham	9/5
MI	2000	Health Benefits Coalition	Abraham	8/20
MI	2000	AFL-CIO	Abraham	8/15
FL	2000	National Right to Work	Nelson/ McCollum	10/23
FL	2000	Handgun Control	McCollum	9/8
NY	1998	NARAL	D'Amato/ Schumer	10/13
NY	1998	NARAL	D'Amato	10/28
NY	1998	NARAL	D'Amato	9/2
NY	1998	Sierra Club	D'Amato	9/1
CA	1998	Sierra Club	Boxer	9/1
CA	1998	Sierra Club	Boxer	9/1
CA	1998	Sierra Club	Boxer	9/1

APPENDIX G

CHAPTER III FIGURES AND TABLES

Figure 3.1 Candidates' Central Campaign Themes in Select 1998 and 2000 Senate Elections

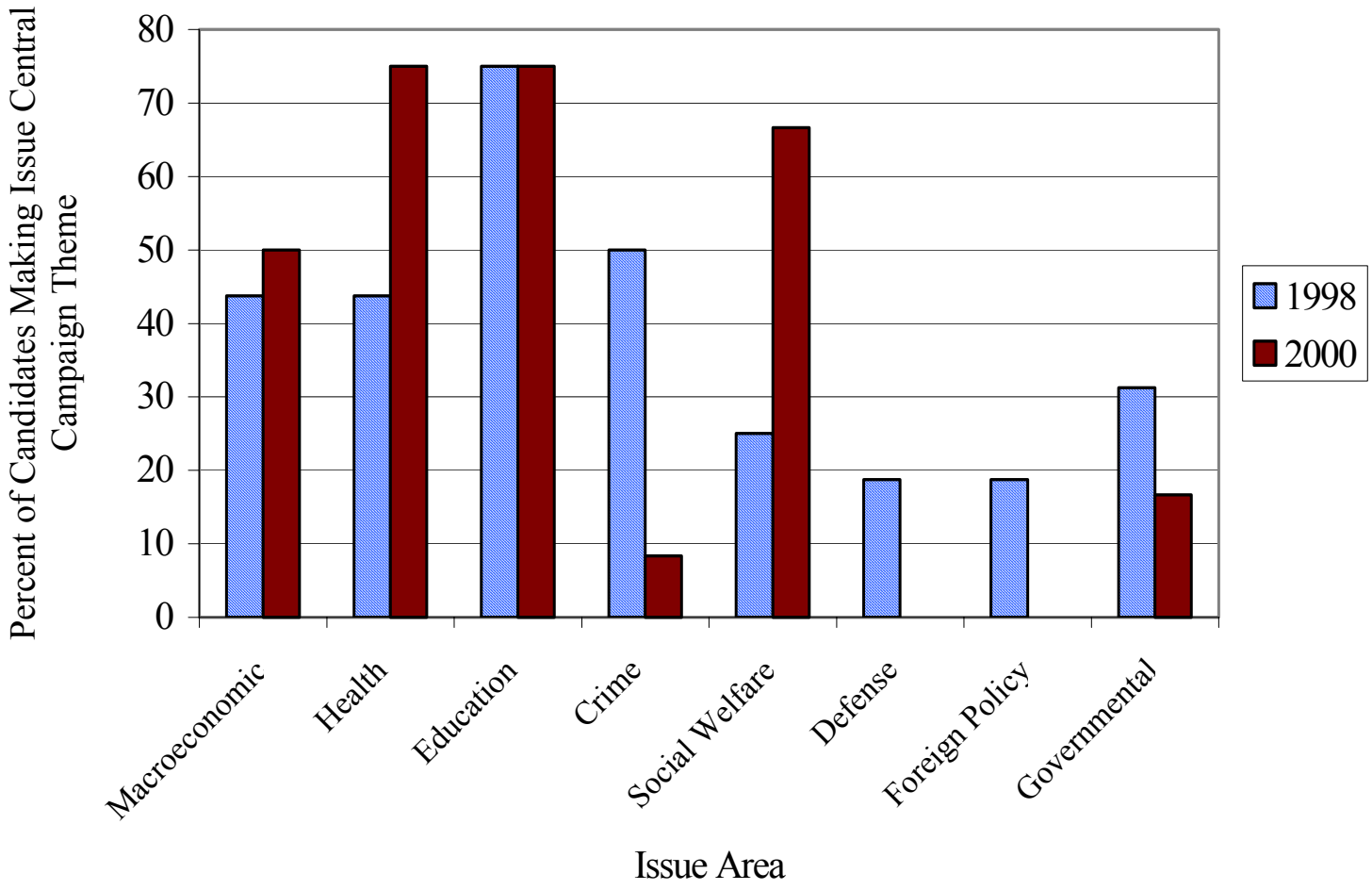


Figure 3.2 Issue Ownership and Candidates' Central Campaign Themes in Select 1998 and 2000 Senate Elections

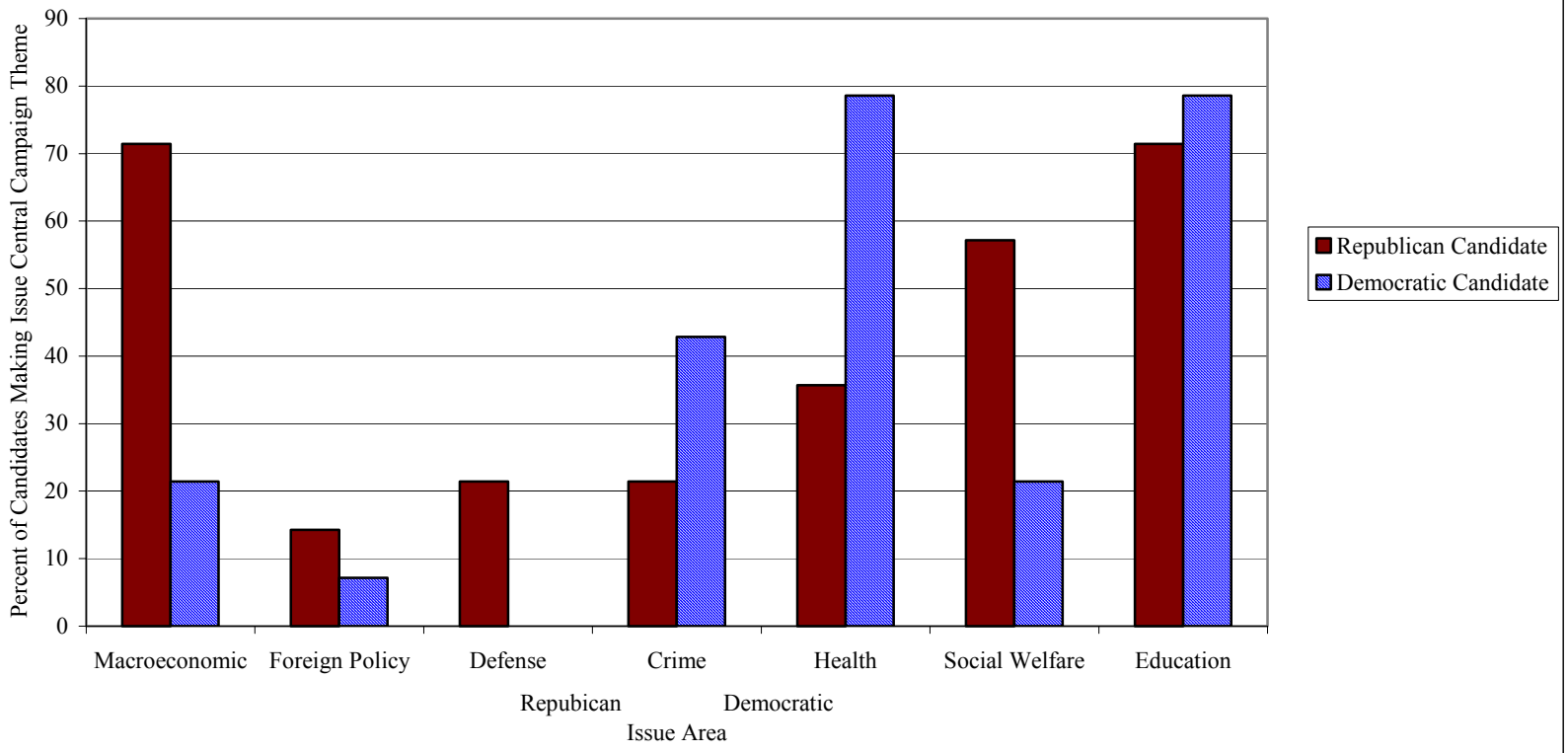


Table 3.1 Select 1998 and 2000 Senate Races Categorized by State Diversity[a]

	Select 1998 and 2000 Senate Races
Heterogeneous States	New York (.551) New Jersey (.530) California (.520) Illinois (.507)
Median States	Florida (.482) Arizona (.469) Michigan (.468) Ohio (.464) Missouri (.450) Oregon (.444)
Homogeneous States	Virginia (.437) Indiana (.432) Arkansas (.395)

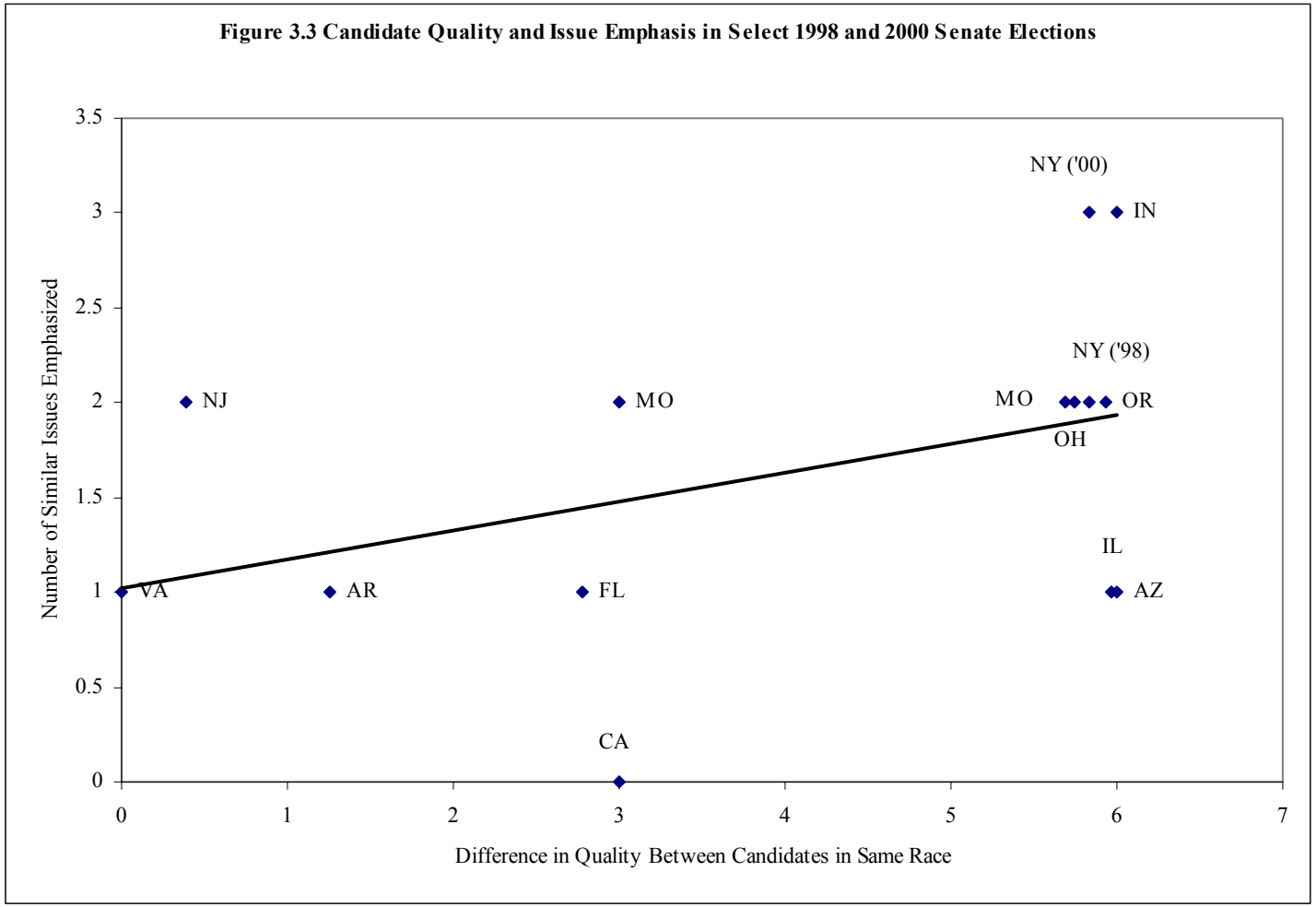
[a] State Diversity Index developed by John L. Sullivan, "Political Correlates of Social, Economic, and Religious Diversity in the American States," *Journal of Politics* 35 (February 1973): 70-84. Index updated by David R. Morgan and Laura Ann Wilson , "Diversity in the American States: Updating the Sullivan Index" in *Publius* 20 (Winter 1990): 71-81. Index ranges from 0 (least diverse) to 1 (most diverse). Categorization is based on dividing all fifty states into three groups (heterogeneous, median, and homogeneous).

Table 3.2 Select 1998 and 2000 Senate Races Categorized by State Political Competition (Ranney Index 1980-1998)[a]

	Select 1998 and 2000 Senate Races
Highly Competitive States	Michigan (.995) Illinois (.988) Florida (.987) New York (.970) New Jersey (.970) Oregon (.956) Ohio (.955) Indiana (.932)
Median States	California (.909) Missouri (.876) Virginia (.852) Arizona (.850)
Non-Competitive States	Arkansas (.697)

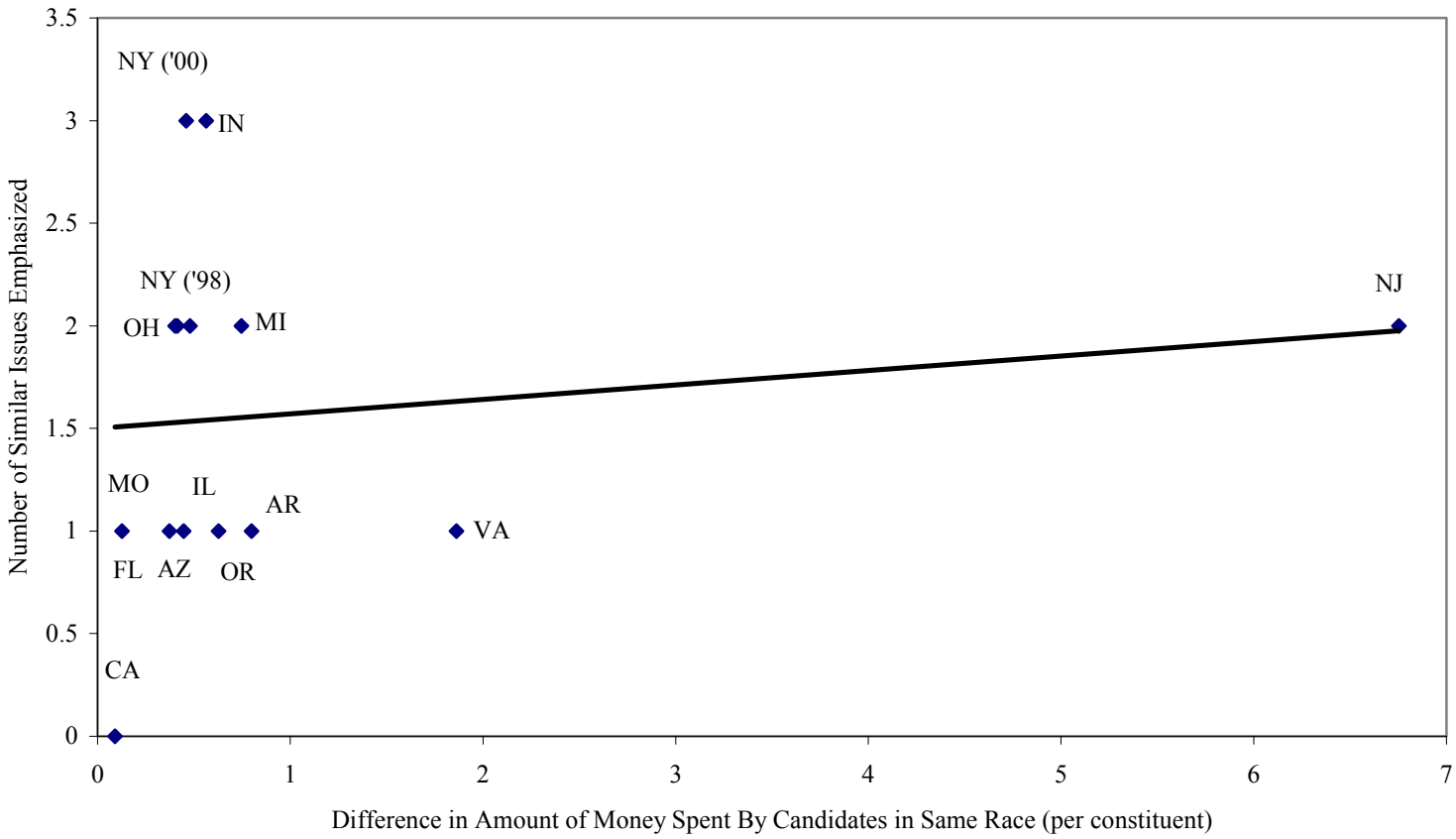
[a] Political Competition Index developed by Austin Ranney, "Parties in State Politics," in *Politics in the American States: A Comparative Analysis*, 3d edition, edited by Herbert Jacob and Kenneth Vines (Boston: Little Brown, 1976). Index updated by Malcolm E. Jewell and Sarah M. Morehouse, *Political Parties in the American States*, 4th edition (Congressional Quarterly Press, 2001). Index ranges from .5 (least competitive) to 1 (most competitive). Categorization is based on dividing all fifty states into three groups (highly competitive, median, and non-competitive).

Figure 3.3 Candidate Quality and Issue Emphasis in Select 1998 and 2000 Senate Elections



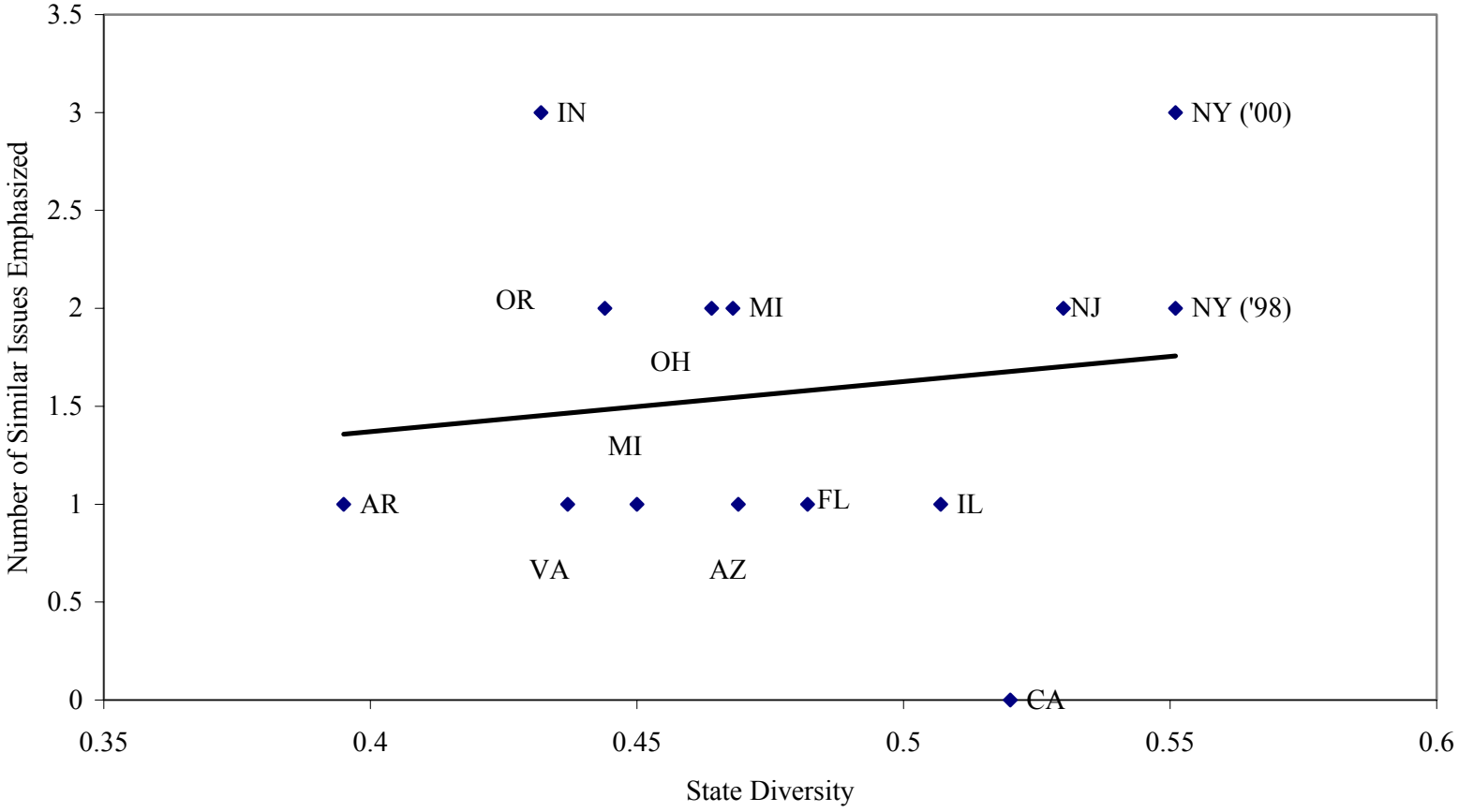
Data Source: Candidate Quality measure based on Squire and Smith (1996). Data comes from the *Almanac of American Politics 2000* and *2002.*

Figure 3.4 Campaign Spending Inequalities and Candidate Issue Emphasis in Select 1998 and 2000 Senate Elections



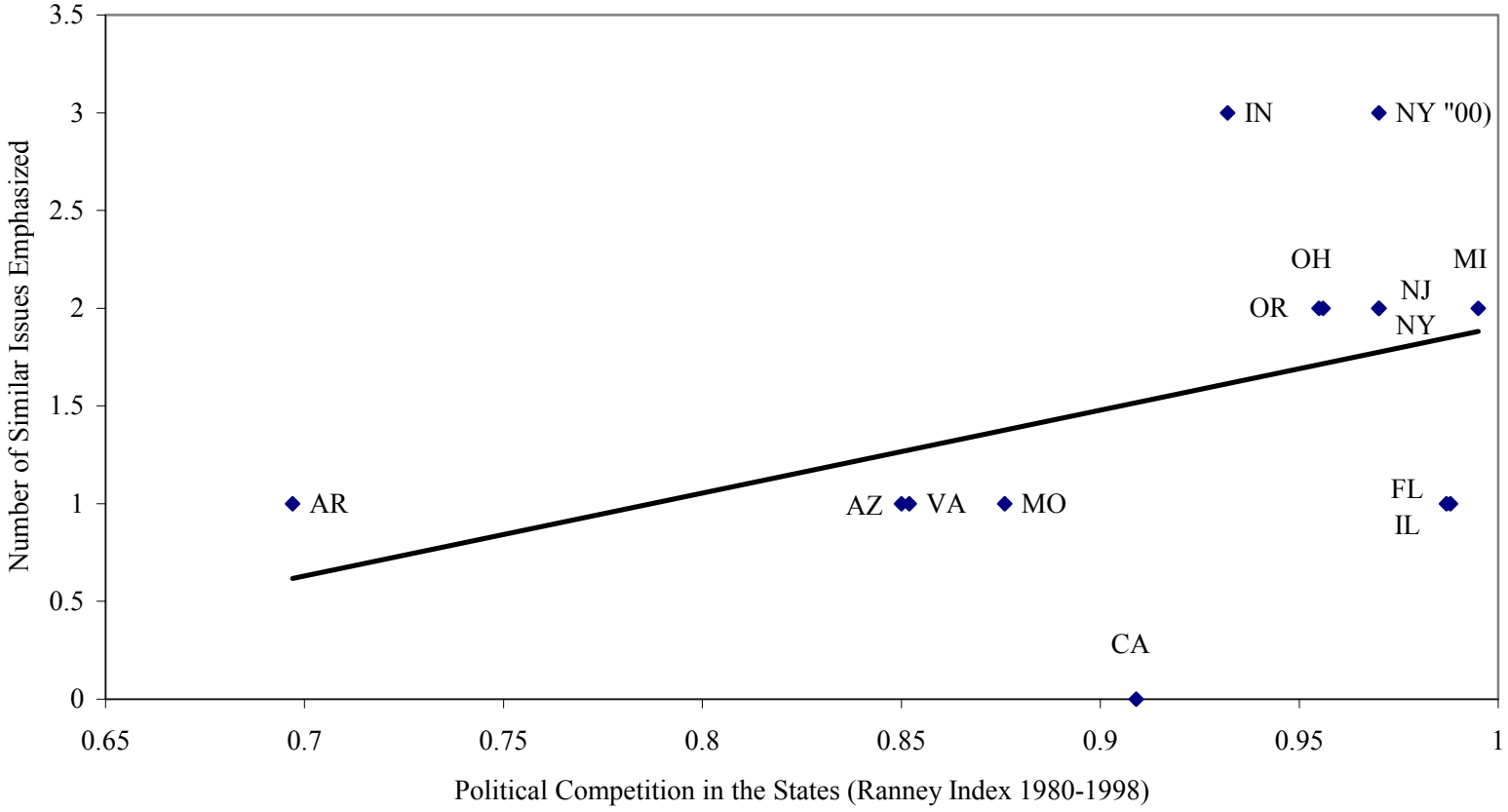
Data Source: Candidate campaign finance data is from the Federal Election Commission (www.fec.gov). State population data is from the *Almanac of American Politics 2000* and *2002*.

Figure 3.5 State Diversity and Candidate Issue Emphasis in Select 1998 and 2000 Senate Elections



Data Source: State Diversity Index developed by John L. Sullivan, "Political Correlates of Social, Economic, and Religious Diversity in the American States," *Journal of Politics* 35 (February 1973): 70-84. Index updated by David R. Morgan and Laura Ann Wilson , "Diversity in the American States: Updating the Sullivan Index" in *Publius* 20 (Winter 1990): 71-81.

Figure 3.6 Political Competition in the States and Candidate Issue Emphasis in Select 1998 and 2000 Senate Races



Data Source: Political Competition Index developed by Austin Ranney, "Parties in State Politics," in *Politics in the American States: A Comparative Analysis*, 3d edition, edited by Herbert Jacob and Kenneth Vines (Boston: Little Brown, 1976). Index updated by Malcolm E. Jewell and Sarah M. Morehouse, *Political Parties in the American States*, 4th edition (Congressional Quarterly Press, 2001).

APPENDIX H

CHAPTER IV FIGURES AND TABLES

Table 4.1 Individual Candidate Responses to Interest Group Advertisements by Type for Select 1998 and 2000 Senate Elections

		Type of Advertisement	
		Negative	**Positive**
Candidate Advertisement Aimed At Responded	**Yes**	9 (47.4%)	1 (10.0%)
	No	10 (52.6%)	9 (90.0%)

N=29[i]; Pearson Chi-Square .04

i. Five of the twenty-four interest group advertisements addressed both candidates. In each case, both candidates' reactions were gauged.

Table 4.2 Candidate Responses to Interest Group Advertisements by Type for Select 1998 and 2000 Senate Elections

		Type of Advertisement		
		Positive	**Mixed**	**Negative**
Either Candidate Responded	Yes	0 (0%)	1 (20.0%)	10 (71.4%)
	No	5 (100%)	4 (80.0%)	4 (28.6%)

N=24; Pearson Chi-square .01

Table 4.3 Candidate Responses to Interest Group Advertisements by Medium for Select 1998 and 2000 Senate Elections

		Medium Used to Broadcast Advertisement	
		Radio	**Television**
Either Candidate Responded	**Yes**	3 (50.0%)	8 (44.4%)
	No	3 (50.0%)	10 (55.6%)

N=24; Pearson Chi-Square .81

Table 4.4 Individual Candidate Responses to Interest Group Advertisements by Month for Select 1998 and 2000 Senate Elections

		Month of Advertisement	
		July-September	**October**
Candidate Advertisement Aimed At Responded	**Yes**	8 (53.3%)	2 (14.3%)
	No	7 (46.7%)	12 (85.7%)

N=29[i]; Pearson Chi-Square .03

i. Five of the twenty-four interest group advertisements addressed both candidates. In each case, both candidates' reactions were gauged.

Table 4.5 Candidate Responses to Interest Group Advertisements by Month for Select 1998 and 2000 Senate Elections

		Month of Advertisement	
		July-September	**October**
Either Candidate Responded	**Yes**	9 (60.0%)	2 (22.2%)
	No	6 (40.0%)	7 (77.8%)

N=24; Pearson Chi-Square .07

Figure 4.1 Type of Interest Group Advertisement by Month in Select 1998 and 2000 Senate Elections

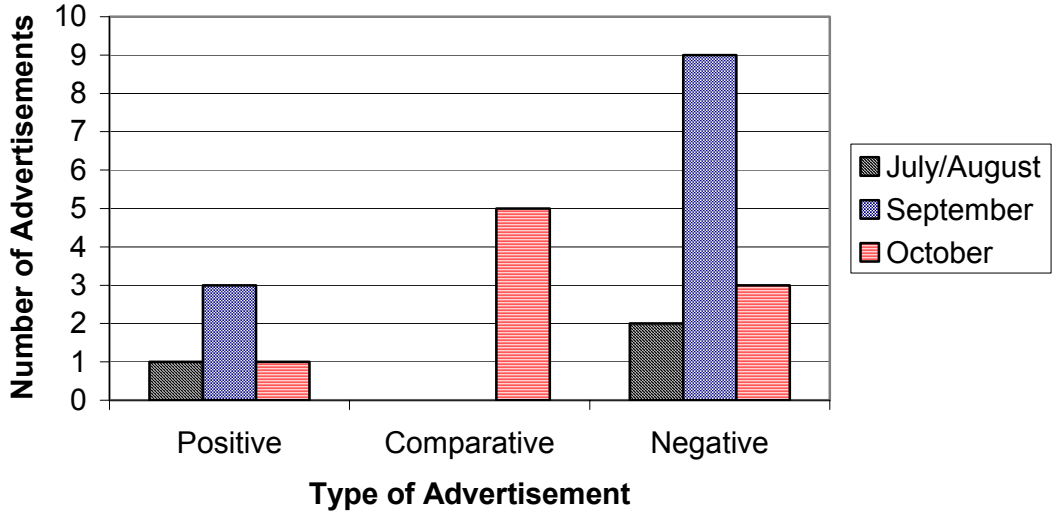


Table 4.6 Individual Candidate Responses to Interest Group Advertisements by Type of Issue Discussed in Select 1998 and 2000 Senate Elections

		Type of Issues Discussed	
		Candidate's Major Issues Discussed	**Candidate's Non-Major Issues Discussed**
Candidate Advertisement Aimed At Responded	**Yes**	6 (37.5%)	4 (30.8%)
	No	10 (62.5%)	9 (69.2%)

N=29[i]; Pearson Chi-Square .71

i. Five of the twenty-four interest group advertisements addressed both candidates. In each case, both candidates' reactions were gauged.

Table 4.7 Individual Candidate Responses to Negative Interest Group Advertisements by Type of Issue Discussed in Select 1998 and 2000 Senate Elections

		Type of Issues Discussed	
		Candidate's Major Issues Discussed	**Candidate's Non-Major Issues Discussed**
Candidate Negative Ad Aimed At Responded	**Yes**	6 (66.7%)	3 (30.0%)
	No	3 (33.3%)	7 (70.0%)

N=19[i]; Pearson Chi-Square .11

i. The negative components of the five "mixed" interest group advertisements are included in the analysis.

Figure 4.2 Discussion of Health Issues in the 1998 New York Senate Election

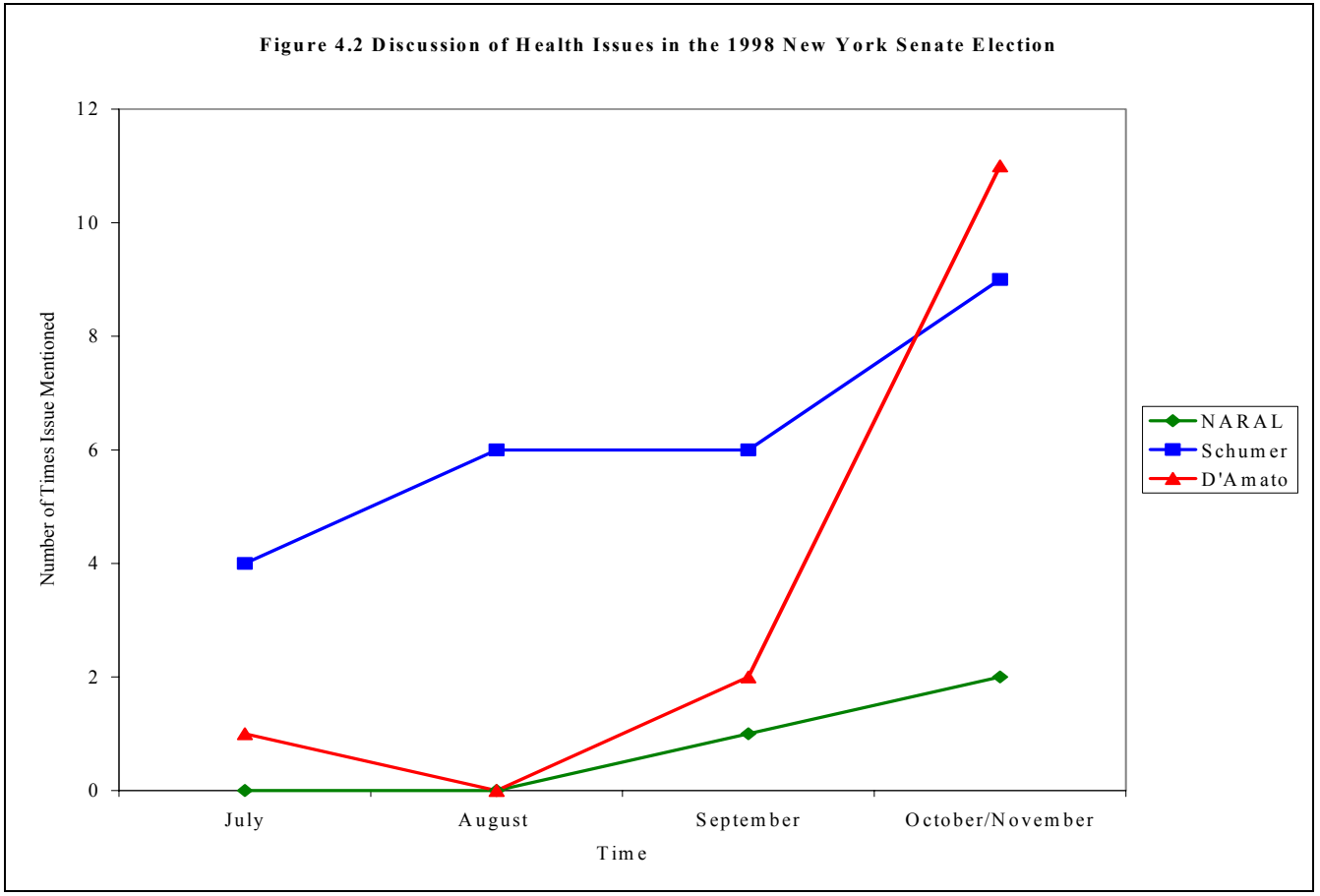


Figure 4.3 Discussion of Abortion in 1998 New York Senate Election

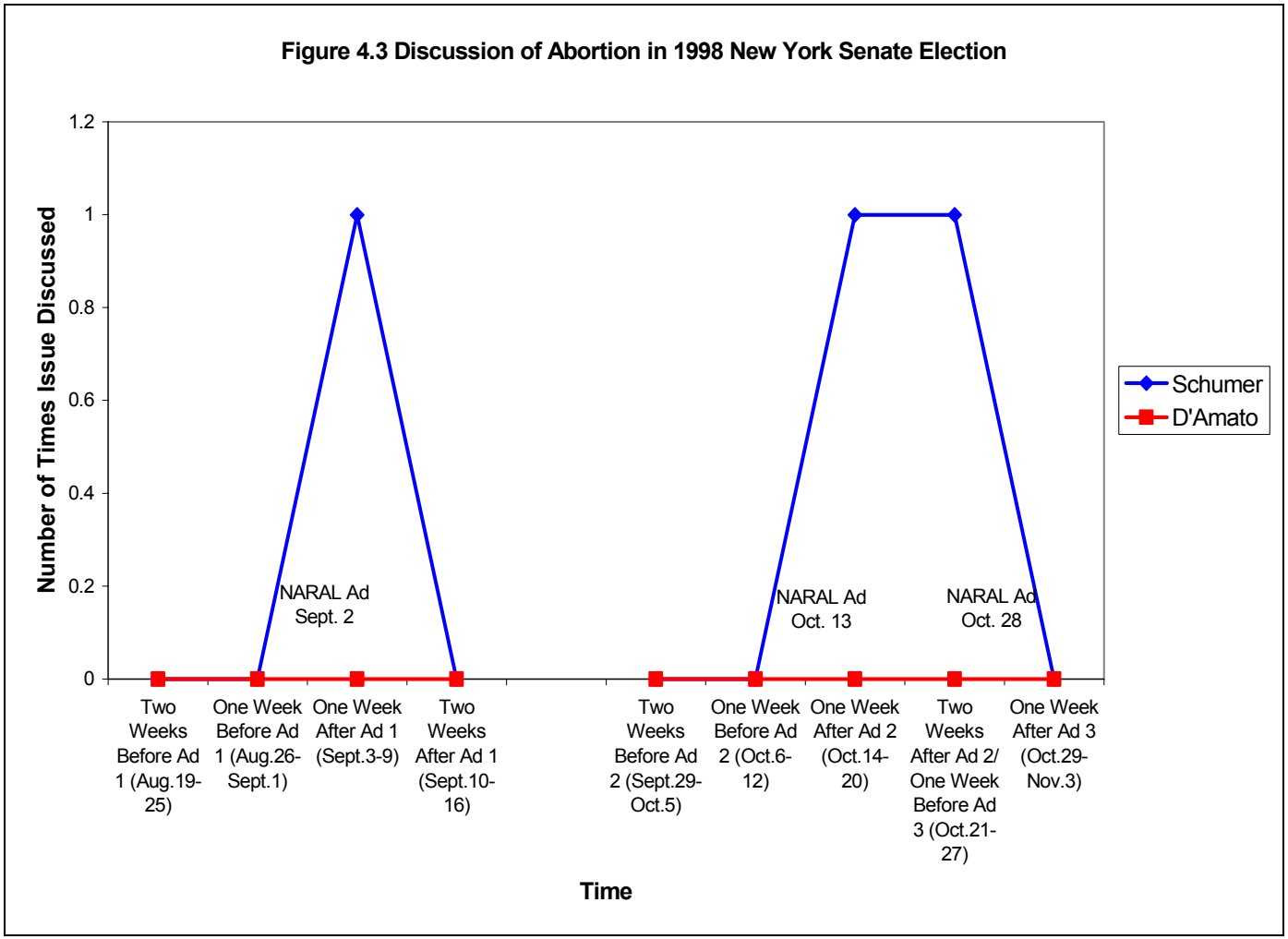


Figure 4.4 Discussion of Health Issues in 1998 New York Senate Election Before and After NARAL Campaign Advertisement

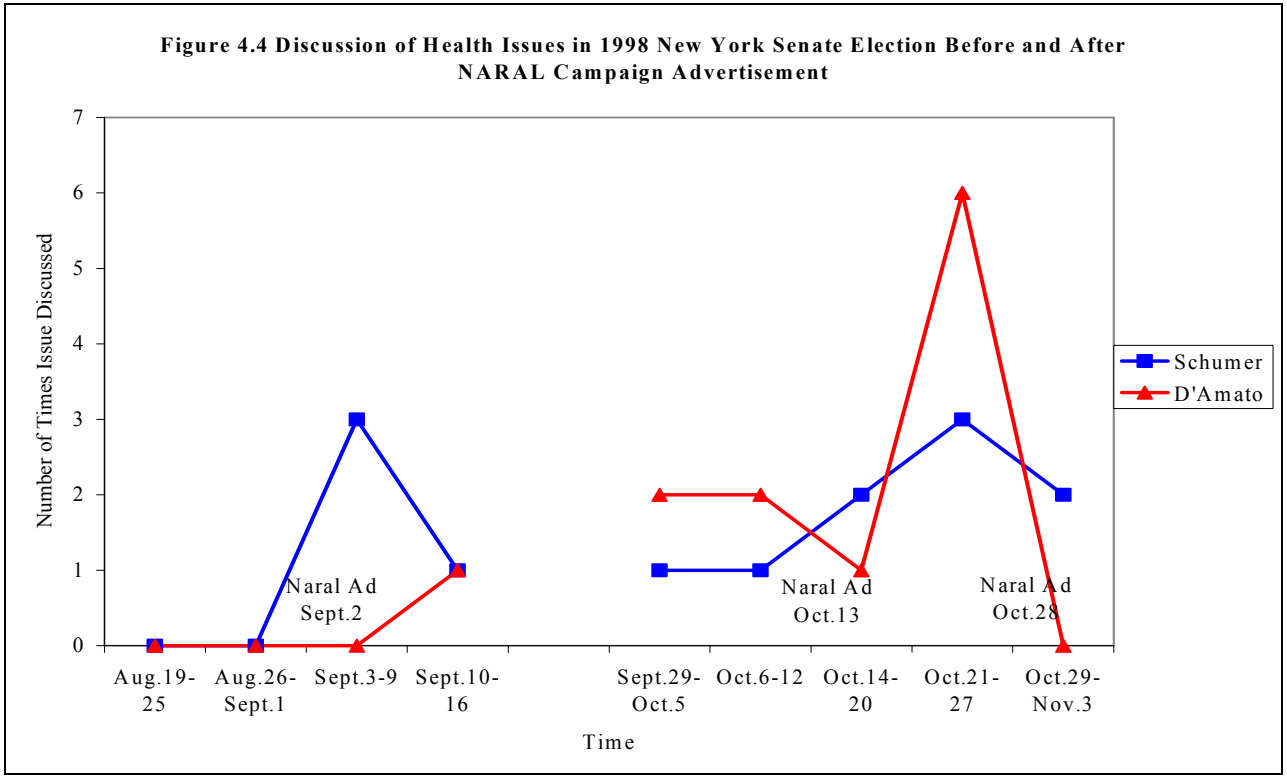
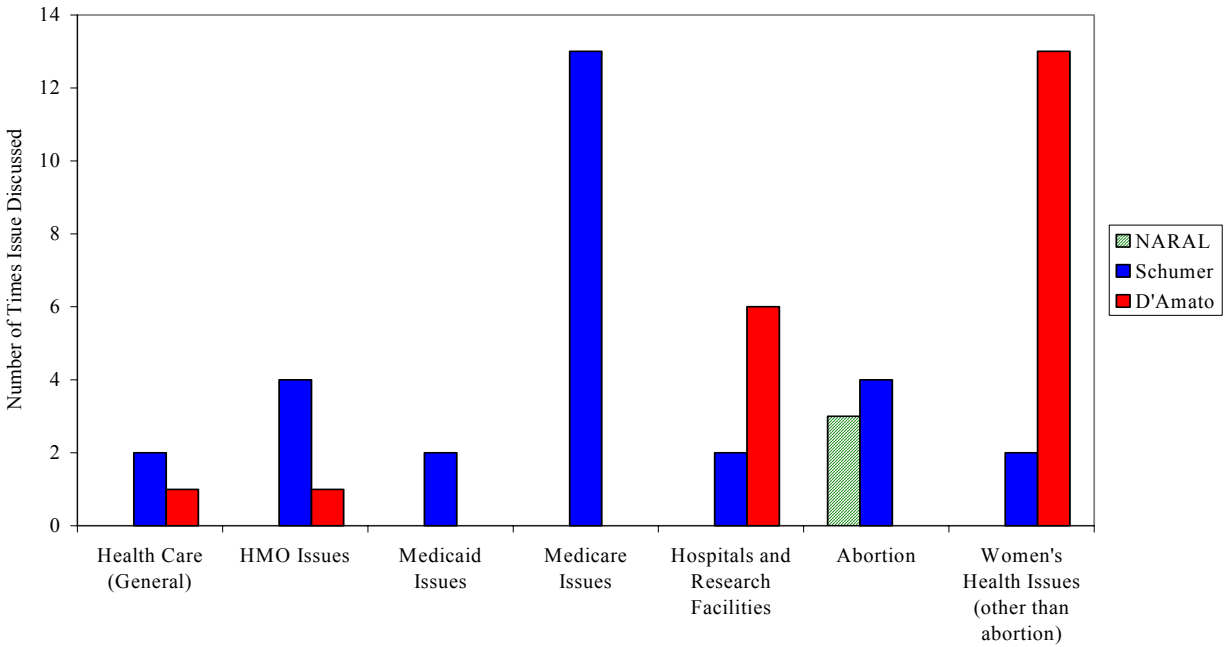


Figure 4.5 Discussion of Health Sub-Issues in 1998 New York Senate Election



APPENDIX I

CHAPTER V FIGURES AND TABLES

Table 5.1 Select 1998 and 2000 Senate Races Categorized by Extent of Discrepancy Between Candidate's Message and Media Coverage

"Extensive" Discrepancy	"Minimal" Discrepancy	"No" Discrepancy
Illinois (1998) New York (1998) Michigan (2000) Ohio (1998) Arkansas (1998) Arizona (1998) Oregon (1998) Indiana (2000) (57.1%)	Florida (2000) New York (2000) (14.3%)	California (1998) Missouri (1998) Virginia (2000) New Jersey (2000) (28.6%)

Table 5.2 Extent of Discrepancy Between Candidate Messages and Media Coverage in Select 1998 and 2000 Senate Races Categorized by the Competitiveness of the Race

	Highly Competitive	Moderately Competitive	Not Competitive
"Extensive"[1] Discrepancy	Illinois (1998) New York (1998) Michigan (2000) (42.9%)	Ohio (1998) Arkansas (1998) (50.0%)	Arizona (1998) Oregon (1998) Indiana (2000) (100.0%)
"Minimal" Discrepancy	Florida (2000) New York (2000) (28.6%)	(0.0%)	(0.0%)
"No" Discrepancy	California (1998) Virginia (2000) (28.6%)	Missouri (1998) New Jersey (2000) (50.0%)	(0.0%)

[1] The agenda setting effect is considered to be "extensive" if (1) the primary issue covered (the one most often discussed in news articles) was emphasized by neither candidate or if (2) two or more of the three main issues focused on by the news were not part of either candidate's main emphasis.

Table 5.3 Select 1998 and 2000 Senate Races Categorized By Level of "Balance" In Media Coverage

	Race
Media Coverage "Imbalanced"	Arizona (1998) California (1998) Illinois (1998) Ohio (1998) Oregon (1998) New York (1998) Florida (2000) (50.0%)
Media Coverage "Balanced"	Arkansas (1998) Missouri (1998) Indiana (2000) Michigan (2000) New Jersey (2000) New York (2000) Virginia (2000) (50.0%)

Table 5.4 Level of "Balance" in Select 1998 and 2000 Senate Races Categorized by the Competitiveness of the Race

	Highly Competitive	**Moderately Competitive**	**Not Competitive**
Media Coverage "Imbalanced"	California (1998) Illinois (1998) New York (1998) Florida (2000) (57.1%)	Ohio (1998) (25.0%)	Arizona (1998) Oregon (1998) (66.7%)
Media Coverage "Balanced"	Michigan (2000) New York (2000) Virginia (2000) (42.9%)	Arkansas (1998) Missouri (1998) New Jersey (2000) (75.0%)	Indiana (2000) (33.3%)

Table 5.5 Select 1998 and 2000 Senate Races with Media "Imbalance": Does the Media Favor the Incumbent?

	Incumbent Favored	**Incumbent *Not* Favored**
Races with Media "Imbalance" and Incumbent (Arizona, California, Illinois, New York [1998], Oregon)	California (1998) Illinois (1998) (40.0%)	Arizona (1998) New York (1998) Oregon (1998) (60.0%)

Table 5.6 Select 1998 and 2000 Senate Races with Media "Imbalance": Does the Media Favor the Candidate Endorsed by the Newspaper?

	Candidate Endorsed Favored	**Candidate *Not* Endorsed Favored**
Races with Media "Imbalance" (Arizona, California, Florida, Illinois, New York [1998], Ohio, Oregon)	New York (1998) (14.3%)	Arizona (1998) California (1998) Florida (2000) Illinois (1998) Ohio (1998) Oregon (1998) (85.7%)

Table 5.7 Select 1998 and 2000 Senate Races with Media "Imbalance": Does the Media Favor the Democratic Candidate?

	Democratic Candidate Favored	**Republican Candidate Favored**
Races with Media "Imbalance" (Arizona, California, Florida, Illinois, New York [1998], Ohio, Oregon)	Arizona (1998) California (1998) Florida (2000) Illinois (1998) Ohio (1998) New York (1998) (85.7%)	Oregon (1998) (14.3%)

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